2017

Tracing the ancestral roots and the flow of pedagogical practices in the development of ballet teaching from 1950 to 2016 in Perth, Western Australia

Diana C. M. Beck

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Tracing the ancestral roots and the flow of pedagogical practices in the development of ballet teaching from 1950 to 2016 in Perth, Western Australia

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Arts (Performing Arts)

Diana Cecile Margaret Beck

Edith Cowan University
Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
2017
Abstract

In the history of dance, that of ballet is but a fragment. The art of ballet is affiliated with the arts of music, literature, and those of the visual arts: its international history covering some 500 years. This thesis spotlights Perth, the capital of Western Australia (WA) and one of the world’s most geographically isolated capital cities. Throughout its balletic history of less than a century, Perth has seen rapid growth in this art form. As in all the arts, pedagogic rules act as guidelines for the teaching of traditional ballet vocabulary; consequently, in order to understand this development and its impact on the dance scene, a search has ensued of Perth’s balletic history. The present study adopted a qualitative methodology with an auto-ethnographical approach to add to the richness of knowledge and experience in the profession of ballet teaching in Perth. This information is a result of the first-hand experiences of 10 ballet teachers from the dance community of this city. The metaphor of a tree was used to organise the chronology of events framed through the efforts of three generations of teachers. The metaphor of water was used to represent the transference of the balletic pedagogy, with art now having the support of science, complemented by a knowledge of anatomy and the physical laws of balance and biomechanics. Reminiscences were elicited through face-to-face interviews that disclosed the views of differing ethnic groups, revealing differing balletic styles experienced by participants who have contributed in many ways to this thesis. The findings reveal that a predominantly English upbringing is shared by several of the first and second generations of teachers who continued the traditions of the English methods of ballet teaching. The arrival of the European contingent, who shared their traditions and expertise with Australians altered the status quo. After the later visits of a new wave of master teachers, mostly of European extraction, a hybrid system of teaching emerged, resulting in a freedom of movement and feeling for space that was not always visible in earlier days. The second generation of teachers were instrumental in seeing the growth of the profession into the modern era of ballet teaching. Observations document the somewhat organic growth of ballet teaching in Perth, enriching the theoretical knowledge of this discipline. The growth of the dance profession is echoed in WA’s cultural and social history. The study highlights the fact that a mature and well-respected profession has been established, signifying a strong future for lovers of classical ballet.
Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

i. incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or

iii. contain any defamatory material.

Signature
Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to Cecile de Vos, my mother (1919–2001), and Leslie Hanson Hutchinson (1942–2015), my dear friend and colleague, with deepest gratitude and appreciation.

Leslie, you have been with me throughout this dancing journey. Thank you for the wonderful memories.

Leslie is first on my list of people to thank for their support and interest in this project, but she is by no means the last. Without the previous research conducted by Joan Pope and Lynn Fisher, this task would have been much more difficult. The inspiration to take on this major work came from my friends who have lived through this period as I have. Without the generosity of my colleagues in the Western Australian dance community and on occasions from further afield, I would not have the material to corroborate my own experiences. My special thanks to Gay Cruickshank, Terri Charlesworth, Irina Asotoff-Norris, June Stevens, Gail Meade, Diedre Atkinson, Heléne Gowers, Dame Lucette Aldous, Kim McCarthy, and Jennifer Loth-Hornsley. Thanks also to the West Australian Ballet dancers and students from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, who willingly gave their time to participate in the focus groups. I could not have done it without you.

Sincere thanks to my supervisors, Dr Luke Hopper and Dr Lyndall Adams, for their expertise in this field and for the cossetting and patience when the going got tough. I have learned a lot and would recommend this adventure to all who have the interest and energy to do so.

Thanks also to the friends I have made along the way. Peta Blevins helped me sort out my confusion on occasions. Jacqui Birch also has my gratitude for suffering silently with my inadequate interviewing technique and confirming that I was on the right path with my questions. Thank you to the many people who have helped with the finer points of my research: Dr Jo McFarlane for her support with writing skills; librarians Lutie Sheridan and Amanda Myles for helping me with the complexities of Endnote; and the Graduate Research School’s SOAR ambassadors who have assisted with the intricacies of conquering a computer. Thanks also to Capstone Editing for providing copyediting and proofreading services, according to the guidelines laid out in the university-endorsed national ‘Guidelines for Editing Research Theses”. Thank you all for your patience and time.
My final acknowledgements go to my family. All have been patient with me, sometimes empathising, other times pushing me further. My daughter Rosemary has kept me calm and healthy. My husband Tony has been extraordinary. He has supported me in many a venture, but this one has tried his patience. His efforts to improve my lack of computer skills are much appreciated. The last two and a half years have been difficult, but I am so glad that I have taken this challenge and survived.

I began this journey knowing only that I was very interested in this subject, as I have lived and loved the experiences and I wanted to write it all down. I opened up a Pandora’s Box—I hope that good results will eventuate.
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<tr>
<td>AICD</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Classical Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTD</td>
<td>Commonwealth Society of Teachers of Dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU</td>
<td>Edith Cowan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IADMS</td>
<td>International Association of Dance Medicine and Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISTD</td>
<td>Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAD</td>
<td>Royal Academy of Dancing (1935–2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Royal Academy of Dance (2000–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDE</td>
<td>Schools of Isolated and Distance Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWA</td>
<td>University of Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAB</td>
<td>West Australian Ballet</td>
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<td>WAAPA</td>
<td>Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAPSEC</td>
<td>Western Australian Post-Secondary Education Commission</td>
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Research publications

Introduction

Art is integral with the fabric of life. It is not a separate stream running parallel with the current of human events. It is one of the threads of that current; the sweep of life and the progress of art are identical in movement.

Harold van Buren Magonigle (1867 – 1935)
American architect, artist, author

Dance is ... Movement ... through Space ... in Time ... with Quality

Laurel Martyn (1916 – 2013)
Pioneer of Australian dance

Since the dawn of time, human beings have used stories to convey information, attract attention, and make sense of the world (Sword, 2012). Australians are also good storytellers, and the narratives of several influential members of the Perth dance community that emerged from face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and personal communications in this thesis assist in the unravelling of a small part of the dance culture of Western Australia (WA). Marcel Proust’s suggestion that narratives build from the “swarming thoughts of the honeycomb of remembering” (as cited in Benjamin, 1936, p. 95) is put to the test as they recall experiences of their life’s work.

This project explores the specific historical lineages of ballet teachers over a 66-year period in Perth WA, one of the most remote capital cities in the world (Figure 1). The lineages encompass three generations of teachers who have been actively involved in the development of the ballet teaching profession in Perth. The primary concern of this research was to determine from where our forebears came and how they practiced their art? How did these teachers influence the ballet teaching profession in their community? Laurel Martyn’s (1992) depiction of the elements of dance as movements in time and space with quality, epitomise the philosophies adopted by many dance teachers to inspire future exponents participating in the many genres of dance.

Interviews, focus groups, and personal communications were the primary methods used to elicit information from members of the Perth ballet community. Questions were asked of several leading figures whose careers have been built in WA, regarding their ethnic origin,
and the source of their information on ballet pedagogy. As Judith A, Gray (1989) states “In any theory of dance teaching, the teachers activities and experiences are central to the understanding of the pedagogical process” (p. 16). Possibly it was through the experiences and training of these interviewees that their own practice was developed. Descriptions of available facilities at this time were forthcoming as were the benefits offered by the male dancer to the profession.
Metaphors are a central component in portraying the narrative of this thesis. Michael Dyson’s (2007) appealing explanation that “the essence of metaphor is understanding experience of one kind of thing in terms of another” (p.43) encouraged the use of two metaphors to clarify and underpin the chronology of ballet training in Perth over the study period (see Drew & Hardman, 2007). First, the metaphor of a tree represents three generations of teachers, the roots, trunk, and limbs and the current performers and students are represented as the blossoms. This connects the generations in WA and helps to trace the pedagogical lineage to past European masters. The image embodies the attributes required for a dancer’s technical excellence, whether in repose or in executing balletic movements, achieving control, strength, and beauty.

The second metaphor, water, represents the influential waves of immigration in Perth. The first wave advanced the initial interest in ballet in WA, and the second wave of master teachers brought additional knowledge some 30 years later. The image of water, its colour and movement, also represents the ebb and flow of dance, whether dynamic or lyrical; an inspiration for potential dancers. Water also evokes images of dance, the moving dancer executing poses with fluid control and performing transitions in a graceful or vibrant manner.
The two metaphors are linked, as the life-giving capacity of water nurtures and shapes the sapling tree, reflecting the change and innovation seen in the development of this profession. These metaphors guide the focus of this research on the rapid growth and popularity of ballet in Perth, connecting the people who influenced and encouraged me to love ballet enough to make it my career. In my imagination, the tree is tall and willowy. It is not just any tree but a hybrid conjured up from the Australian landscape—Australian natives combined with more exotic trees from other lands. I visualise strong roots, an elegant and lengthened trunk, and graceful branches with beautiful foliage and flowers. The flowers are a deep purple, mauve, or white, representing the various types of dancers. My tree is similar to *Brunfelsia pauciflora,* which is colloquially named Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: The metaphorical tree. Reprinted with permission from the artist, Samuel Maxted.](image-url)
The metaphors chart my individual journey as a student and performer with teachers from the first generation, and as a teacher of the second generation. I have lived in Perth and worked consistently in this field of artistic expression for over 60 years. These metaphors also give order to the journeys of other individuals whose personal and professional lives are interwoven with mine. This thesis reveals the collective experience of the participants interviewed and includes my voice as an active participant in the research focus. For my professional dancing life, as a performer and teacher, I have used the name of de Vos; therefore, my recollections will be those of Diana de Vos and will utilise an autoethnographical approach as a study of my life experience in the ballet teaching community.

Inevitably, in the discussion of any form of dance, the focus is often on performers and performance. This research focuses on ballet teaching in order to give teachers the recognition they deserve for their experience and expertise. Prima ballerina assoluta of Soviet ballet Galina Ulanova instructs us not “to discuss who is more important. Let us agree that the work of the artist and the work of the teacher are both arts” (as cited in Ward Warren, 1996, p. 4).

Benjamin Harkarvy, Director of the Dance Division at the Julliard School in New York, defines a teacher as “someone with an immense knowledge of the body-instrument, intellectual mastery of the ballet vocabulary and the coordination to perform it in a seemingly harmonious and natural way” (as cited in Ward Warren, 1996, p. ix). Harkarvy adds that a teacher “must have a clearly defined sense of discipline, based on love rather than rigidity,” and describes the element of the “eye,” which can often perceive why a movement is not working successfully (as cited in Ward Warren, 1996, p. ix). Ward Warren (1996) chose 10 international teachers who exemplify those descriptions, “ensuring that the wisdom and methods of these great pedagogues will not be forgotten” (p. 6). She visited Perth in the late 1990s after visits to Perth in the 1980s from two of her profiled pedagogues, Marika Besobrasova and Janina Cunovas. Ward Warren’s (1996) assertion that teachers of classical ballet technique are “the keepers of the flame of an art form that has, regardless of its Eurocentric roots and outmoded bloodlines, withstood the test of time” (p. 4) also applies to the situation in Perth. Furthermore, Harkarvy describes the motivation to teach dance as:

a glorious, lifelong connection to learning, with its springs of curiosity and vitality. Sometimes teaching can even bring the reward of having a pupil stand on one’s shoulders to teach everything you have taught, enhanced by the new, vital experiences accorded to him or her. And so, it should be. (as cited in Ward Warren, 1996, p. x)
These observations by international authorities affirm and recognise the detailed study and continued learning required by the dance teaching profession, offering insights on the important role of teachers. As knowledge passes from generation to generation, their professional practices have an impact on the growth and development of their students.

It is the role of a teacher to maintain a tradition of movement, style, and technical execution begun in the courts of the French monarchy some 400 years ago. Ivor Guest (1960) suggests that these traditions have evolved through:

> the work of countless choreographers, dancers, teachers, musicians, and others of the past has lived on to form the tradition that is every dancer’s heritage. This tradition is the backbone of ballet. Dance technique, for instance, has become what it is today through being passed on from generation to generation…This tradition is not a dead thing, for what is being done today will become the history of tomorrow. (p. xi)

Guest’s (1960) comments piqued dance historian Sandra Noll Hammond’s curiosity and drove her to write extensively on the heritage of ballet technique. Hammond (1995) maintains that Léopold Adice’s manuscripts explicitly define the rules of ballet’s technical background, with examples of how traditions were continued from generation to generation, which demonstrated the cross-fertilisation of information beyond borders and nationalities.

Adice identified himself as an “artiste et professeur de choreographe de perfectionnement attaché à l’académie imperial du grand opéra” [sic] (as cited in Hammond, 1995, p. 34). The date was 1859 and the description is translated as an “artist and teacher of choreography attached to the Imperial Academy of the Grand Opéra” in Paris, France. His assertions are credible, given that he was a well-established dancer at the Opéra, trained by Filippo Taglioni (1777–1871), the great Italian choreographer of the romantic ballet La Sylphide (Koegler, 1977). Adice was demoted “to the position of instructor for the boy’s elementary class” (Hammond, 1995, p. 3) after differences with management over the training methods in the ballet school at the Opera, owing to his assertion that “ballet must be taught with a thorough understanding of its totality” (as cited in Hammond, 1995, p. 35). Adice systematically documented the way material should be structured before it is delivered to the student and introduced other methods that may assist in successful execution of dance vocabulary.

Hammond (1995) establishes that Enrico Cecchetti of the Italian school passed down these traditions to the Russian pedagogue Agrippina Yakovlevna Vaganova. Hammond’s own experience with teachers from La Scala in Milan is testament to this theory. In addition, she asserts that Adice’s *Grammaire et Théorie* documents “our tradition as no other works have done” (Hammond, 1995, p. 54). Gray (1989) notes that “dance teachers traditionally have
taught as they themselves were taught” (p. 3), continuing the cycle of maintaining the traditions.

The observations made by these international scholars, Guest (1960), Hammond (1995), and Gray (1989) all in the latter half of the 20th century, exemplify the way that teachers follow this tradition of using structure and content in the training of dancers rather than delivering material in an ad-hoc or careless manner. The authors agree that this manner of teaching has been a part of the culture of European and American centres of ballet for some time (Gray, 1989). Throughout the literature, teachers have been acknowledged as a vital component in the continuation of this tradition, a tradition that continues in Perth.

Aims

One aim with several sub aims are proposed in this thesis. The primary aim is to qualitatively examine in what manner internationalism, identity, and the traditions of 10 ballet teachers interviewed in this study interacted through specific ancestral lines in Perth from 1950 to 2016. The first sub aim is to learn what philosophies (technical, musical, and artistic) have been followed by the teachers of each lineage. The second sub aim is to investigate how new advances in educational methods have been used to improve ballet pedagogy. The third sub aim is to assess how access to facilities and services assisted in the development of standards among the ballet teaching community. The fourth sub aim is to gauge whether the participation, acceptance, and experiences of male dancers in the dance community have changed over time in order for them to study ballet with an eventual outcome of becoming professional dancers and teachers.

Significance

This research will provide a historic context for dance professionals intending to work in this field in Perth. The combination of archival and empirical evidence will provide important information for future generations. The intention is to fill the gap in the dance history of Perth with particular reference to the discipline or “branch of instruction” (Sword, 2012, p. 12), referred to as the teaching of ballet vocabulary. This is the practice that occurs behind the scenes in studios in Perth and its suburbs. The educational aspect of ballet is not often considered to be as important as its performance; unfortunately, the practice of teaching ballet is often the hidden but important aspect of the art form and to my knowledge a study of this kind has not been undertaken before in Australia.
There is noteworthy evidence that the expectations of classical ballet standards have changed, from both a social and technical point of view. The thesis explains educational advances made in the Western Australian context that will have a significant impact on novice teachers. A career in teaching ballet can begin with the benefit of traditions fostered for centuries. The prominent commentator Laurel Martyn (1992) observed that Australian dance history has been neglected; however, the history of dance in WA has progressed significantly to a stage where that situation can now be rectified.

If the dance community considers what has been learned from past masters and utilises that knowledge, then it may be possible to “present this art form with our own accent” (Anderson, 1992, p. 218.). The balletic heritage entrusted to present teachers of ballet is the legacy for future generations.

**Research questions**

1. How has the internationalism, identity, and traditions of the 10 ballet teachers interviewed for this research interacted through specific ancestral lines in Perth over the designated time period from 1950 to 2016?
   a. What philosophies (technical, musical, and artistic) have been followed by these teachers?
   b. How were new advances in educational methods used by the teachers to improve ballet pedagogy?
   c. How has access to facilities and services assisted in the development of standards among this ballet teaching community?
   d. How did the participation, acceptance, and experiences of male dancers in this dance community change over time?

**Chapter outlines**

Chapter one outlines the methodology and the methods employed in this study. A qualitative methodology was selected with an auto-ethnographical approach, utilising a literature review, archival research, interviews, and focus groups. The data collected through the interviews was examined using thematic coding and narrative analysis. Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research period.

Chapter two reviews the literature on historical, social, and technical issues involving the art form of ballet. It provides an overview of the teaching profession in Perth, an abbreviated
history of ballet from Europe and England, music and its relationship to dance, and texts on anatomical knowledge, as well as a selection of literature on the history of ballet in Perth.

Chapter three delves into the historical background of first- and second-generation teachers of English extraction residing in Perth. It describes the work and practices of these founding teachers and their interaction with their students who became teachers of the second generation. The roots of the tree represent the first generation, while the trunk represents the second generation. Together, they form the ancestral tree of the English lineage.

Chapter four continues with two generations of teachers of the European lineage. It describes the arrival of the first wave of Europeans to Perth, joining the English lineage to become the first generation of the ballet teaching profession in Perth. They are referred to as the roots of the ancestral tree. Their students’ development is also explored, as they form the second generation of this lineage and are referred to as the trunk of the tree.

Chapter five describes the second or new wave of influence by visiting master pedagogues from Europe and from Melbourne, Australia in the 1980s. It discusses the establishment of private ballet schools and integrated ballet programmes in public sector schools. The chapter also chronicles the backgrounds of the interviewees who represent the third-generation teachers.

Chapter six contains the reflections of the third generation of teachers, represented by the branches of the ancestral tree, on the benefits of their training in Perth. They describe their international performance careers and their transition to the teaching profession. Current professional dancers and pre-professional students, represented by the blossoms of the tree, also offer their views on the state of the ballet teaching profession in Perth.

The conclusion brings together the threads of this research by establishing the heritage of this art form in Perth. This research, a snapshot of history in ballet education, highlights the role of teachers in the community and acts as a testimony for dedication, perseverance, and continued desire for improvement, clearly showing advancement in this discipline. The balletic heritage entrusted to present teachers of ballet in Perth is the legacy for future generations who may build on the efforts of the pioneering teachers to continue successfully into the twenty-first century.
Chapter one: Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used to examine how the art of teaching ballet has developed over 66 years in Perth. Steven Taylor and Robert Bogdan (1998) define methodology as the way “in which problems are approached and how we seek answers” (p. 3). A qualitative methodology facilitated “a research study based on direct observation of natural situations or settings” (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 1), and interviews were conducted to collect descriptive data in participants’ own words (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

Qualitative methodology

A qualitative methodology, theoretically, allows freedom in the use of less factual language or in the manner of speech, ensuring quality even if it is of a subjective nature. The methodology “provides the opportunity to depict or represent ideas and the social or communal organisation of the groups involved” (Silverman, 2016, p. 22), despite limitations such as uncodified procedures, lack of reliability, and imprecise modes of data analysis (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The present study interviewed 10 participants for their views on what has for most of them been a lifetime occupation—ballet teaching. They were selected for their long association and familiarity with the profession in Perth. Through this process, the philosophical, conceptual, and contextual perspectives of the participants are revealed (Brikci & Green, 2007).

An auto-ethnographical approach

An auto-ethnographical approach was of interest owing to the ethnicity of many of the participants. My own ethnic background and long association with this profession motivated my desire to recover this somewhat forgotten part of history. Carolyn Ellis (2004) defines auto-ethnographical narrative as “research writing, story and method that connect the auto biographical and personal to the cultural, social and political” (p. xix). Its epistemological basis embraces, rather than attempts to limit, the researcher’s subjectivity, and “whether a work is called auto-ethnographical depends on the claims made by the author as anything else” (Ellis, 2004, p. 449). Garance Marechal suggests it “involves self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic field work and writing” (as cited in Mills, Duropos, & Weebe, 2010, p. 43). Thus, the views offered in the interviews and focus groups are considered and reported accordingly.
Morwenna Griffiths (2012) discusses “the nature of reflexive behaviour as linked to the social/political, relational self, becoming what it is not yet. Exercising reflexivity involves paying explicit attention to the specific perspectives of the researcher” (p. 184). Thus, in the present study, the researcher’s experience is presented alongside that of the interviewees. Griffiths (2012) elaborates that an understanding of the self and its place in research is crucial for this type of study because it upholds the personal, the creative, the imaginative, and the passionate: the human. In short, it is an essential reminder of the humanity at the core of society and its well-being. Reflexivity and auto-ethnography are closely connected, as the self is the main focus in the latter. An awareness of the former instils in the researcher the importance of ensuring at all times that the work is unbiased, trustworthy, and transferable (Griffiths, 2012). These three tenets were applied to the selection and ordering of data collected in this research to ensure that it is presented in a thoughtful and accurate manner.

My ancestry is European. I arrived in Australia with my family as a three-year-old in March 1947. My ancestors—Dutch nationals—lived in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) for 400 years until they became British citizens. That history has shaped my life in Perth in various ways. At that time the name de Vos was foreign to our Australian neighbours; my middle names, in particular Cecile, were kept secret for a long time. In the early years we spent a lot of time with extended family continuing customs developed in Ceylon. For instance, the way in which we spoke English—not only the clipped accent but the odd words in our vocabulary that I dared not say in the hearing of my school friends. Food we ate, such as rice and curry, Kiribath, poffertjes and our Christmas cake were other sources of embarrassment. My lack of interest in sport and going to the beach was exaggerated by my interest in ballet, creating a gulf between my friends and I. Now as a middle-class female of mature years, I approach this research through the lens of my personal experiences of learning ballet in WA and my professional achievements as a dancer with the West Australian Ballet (WAB), a teacher, and an international examiner with the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD). This information has been integrated within the thesis in green text, signifying I am speaking not only as the researcher but also auto-ethnographically—making personal connections to the cultural, social, and political contexts in the research.

This auto-ethnographical approach enabled the connections between the origins of ballet in Europe and the growth of ballet teaching in Perth to be explored through the participants’ voices. The participants’ ancestral ties and professional links revealed connections between international and local identities. For convenience, the focus was placed on our shared
ethnicity; from this perspective, it was possible to unravel relationships between groups of like-minded people who formed enclaves in various areas around Perth.

In this study, I acknowledge a bias due to my close connections with these individuals, as I have worked with them all in some capacity at some time. As Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005) assert, “behind all research stands the biography of the gendered researcher, who speaks from a particular class, racial, cultural and ethnic community perspective. We can only see what our class, culture, race, gender or other factors allows us to recognize” (p. 21). The human aspects were linked to the broader cultural and social context of Perth by interweaving the narratives of all involved in this project. Since my early days as a ballet student, I have known teachers of the first and second generations as acquaintances, friends, teachers, or colleagues. Two of the third-generation participants in the focus groups were my students. The conversations have been instrumental in connecting different perspectives that form a clear picture of activities in Perth and relating specific incidents that our lived experiences have endorsed in the research findings (Costly, Elliott, & Gibbs, 2010).

As the researcher, I must be aware of bias and what that implies, particularly as I am working from an interpretive perspective. The need to be vigilant and to ensure that each participant’s reflections are accurately positioned has been noted. Our combined reflections form a part of the picture of the ballet teaching profession in Perth. A limitation of this thesis is that I have investigated only those colleagues with whom I have worked; consequently, claims cannot be made that it is a complete picture of the development of the profession in Perth.

The participants who have graciously taken part in this research as interviewees are Gay Cruickshank, Terri Charlesworth, Irina Asotoff-Norris, June Stevens, Gail Meade, Diedre Atkinson, and Heléne Gowers. As teachers of the second generation, they form the trunk of the tree. Also interviewed is Lucette Aldous, whose training and performance career coincided with the second generation though her teaching career in WA occurred at a later stage. Her insights are valuable because of her contribution to the development of dance training at a tertiary level. Kim David McCarthy and Jennifer Loth-Hornsley are representative of the third generation and beneficiaries of the efforts of the second-generation teachers—they are the branches of the tree. Two focus groups took part in the research: professional dancers from WAB (Group 1) and current second- and third-year students in the WAAPA diploma course (Group 2). These young artists, the blossoms of the tree, provide data that substantiates the success of the teaching methods used since the late twentieth century.
Methods

The following methods have been adopted to facilitate and clarify all the data gathered for this project: literature review, archival research, interviews, focus groups, and personal communications, as well as thematic coding and narrative analysis.

Literature review

The extensive recent literature on classical ballet is considered in Chapter two as preparation for the research by “analysing the past to prepare for the future” (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. xiii). Focusing on works by seminal authors in the field of dance history and pedagogy, the review explores the roots of classical ballet in the courts of the Italian states, its migration to the French court and then to other parts of Europe and beyond. The emergent themes include musical knowledge in relation to dance; dancers’ health, focusing on anatomical knowledge; and the role of males in dance as students, dancers, and teachers. Subsidiary issues such as the traditional views of dance training, changes in choreographic styles, and the characteristics of a good teacher have been explored to a lesser degree in the literature.

Archival research

As noted above, the careful analysis of archival records was expected to provide valuable information on the lives, concerns, and aspiration of individuals and groups in this study (Mills et al., 2010, p. 29). Lavinia Stanl’s (2010) point that “when used systematically together with information drawn from independent sources they [archival records] can shed light on the past and its relationship with current events” (p. 30) was an invaluable guide for the gathering of data. The initial intention was to examine extensive archival material to explore the professional practices of the first-generation teachers. There was disappointingly little, but some archival material helped to confirm the ethnicity and dance backgrounds of the first generation of both lineages. Information on Linley Wilson, Evelyn Hodgkinson, Kira Bousloff, Marina Berezowsky, and Janina Cunovas was mainly retrieved from their obituaries. A recorded interview by Cruickshank for an Australian Association for Dance Education Project supplied much on Stacy’s background. The public records in the archives of WAB, the Battye Library, and The West Australian newspaper produced very little on the early protagonists, either of a personal or professional nature. There is considerable documentation on the performance ability of the teachers of European lineage but little explanation of the methods used in their teaching practice.
Interviews

In this research, interviews were used as the primary data source. According to Holstein and Gubrium (1995, p. 26), the concept of an active interview derives from an ontologically warranted basis for construing the production, collection, and analysis of information in a particular way, and demands its own set of procedural and analytical guidelines.

The participants’ interviews were recorded both aurally and visually, enabling continual reference back to the original data. As a participant researcher, I completed the membership as I knew the cast of characters (Lofland et al., 2006). Previous studies suggest that this method has the advantage of being a synchronous communication of time and place, allowing the interviewer to be alert for social cues such as intonation, facial expression, and body language (Opdenakker, 2006). The interview questions were based on themes such as ethnic background; association with ballet societies; knowledge of technical, musical, and artistic philosophies; and the participation of males in ballet, which directed an understanding of the development of ballet training in Perth. The relaxed or conversational aspect of a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was deliberately chosen to allow participants to speak freely about their own perspectives on the research topic (Opdenakker, 2006). However, this method does encourage the conversation to digress from the point of the question, which certainly occurred on some of these occasions. The participants were forthcoming about their experiences with their teachers of the first generation. All alluded to their methods of teaching and their manner of demonstration. They revealed the personal character traits and idiosyncratic behaviour of the protagonists and how the participants followed their example in the development of the ballet teaching profession in Perth. A copy of the interview questions is included in Appendix 2.

Focus groups

Focus groups were another method of collecting data. The hybrid nature of a focus group has been raised, but “any group discussion may be called a focus group so long as the researcher is actively encouraging of, and attentive to the group interaction” (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999, p. 20). Another view is that a focus group has the capacity to offer an inclusive approach; in essence, it is the researcher’s interest that provides the focus on the data, which comes from group interaction (Morgan, 1996). Working in this manner allowed interaction and made it possible to elicit a range of views (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999), but made it
difficult to arrive at a consensus. Related questions following identical themes were asked of the participants in the interviews and focus groups.

The gender balance of the focus groups was not addressed, as there was only one professional male dancer and three male students. The females far outnumbered the males. Most of the participants had trained in Perth, with some coming from regional WA or the eastern states of Australia to complete their tertiary education at WAAPA. I spoke with current WAB dancers (Group 1) to gain insights into their training, as well as full-time WAAPA students (Group 2). Although students from other schools in the Perth metropolitan area could have made a valuable contribution, as they may have experienced a different training system, this was beyond the scope of the current research.

**Thematic coding**

Typically, thematic coding occurs after data collection and transcription of participant interviews and focus group discussions. The verbatim transcription was carried out by the researcher (Squire, 2004). The technique of coding assisted in sorting and analysing the themes and was used to identify important details from the transcripts. It was also a way to keep rigorous control of information recovered from visual and aural recordings. A spreadsheet was organised to recognise the key themed categories: ethnicity, family background, dance training, professional teaching background, improvements in the number of males learning dance, and improvements in health and safety requirements. Each theme was colour coded for easy recognition. Coding also enabled a seamless transition when writing the chapters following the timeline of the balletic heritage and generations.

**Narrative analysis**

Narrative analysis is a method of qualitative research used for organisation, which considers the “sequence and consequence” of oral narratives of personal interest (Riessman, 2005, p. 1). I listened to the participants who engaged in sharing and recounting experiences and events in the given time frame. This was the interpretive phase. According to Freeman (2004), narrative analysis assisted by coding allows the researcher to:

> trace the life histories of individual artists but at the same time he positions these life histories within the modern narratives of art that ‘write’ these lives and he pays attention to the unconscious structures of meaning that traverse life’s stories. (p. 4)

Narrative analysis has two parallel academic paths, “the first being the post war rise of humanist approaches within western sociology and psychology” and the second being
Russian structuralist and later French poststructuralist approaches to narrative within the humanities (Salmon, 1985; Squire, 2004). The second path was chosen, as it provides a “transparent window onto narrative’s universal human, possibly even biological, significance in individual and social life: its involvement in all patterns of interaction, ethics and living in time” (Salmon, 1985, p. 10). In this tradition, the researcher does not tell the story so much as they are told by it (Squire, 2004). Through coding, the narrative was sorted and analysed, leading to findings rather than accurate results. This has been beneficial in unravelling the actions and characters of those in this story who are still actively teaching. According to Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou (2004), it is:

a means to ascertain both contradictions in the humanist mode of thought that is to maintain the narrative fluidity while being aware of the unconscious as well as conscious meanings perhaps alluding to relationships of power. (p. 4)

When using narrative analysis, the researcher must be aware that the participant is recounting a particular incident. If it is an event or experience that others have experienced, the boundaries can be porous or overlapping. More substantial evidence such as scraps of letters or photographs can influence the data. Photographs are included as figures, but no correspondence other than personal communications are cited in this research. Memories of events, thoughts, and feelings can give rise to external expression, which in turn will enrich this research (Squire, 2004). Riessman (2005) advises, “story telling does not assume objectivity rather it privileges positionality and subjectivity,” as “the perspectives of both narrator and interviewer can come into view” (p. 173). Plummer and Riessman suggest that “for narratives to flourish there must be a community to hear … for communities to hear, there must be stories which weave together their history, their identity and their politics” (as cited in Riessman, 2005). These suggestions did transpire, as certain histories were woven together through links or similarities in their ethnicity and dance culture rather than their politics.

Ethics

This research has been conducted in accordance with Edith Cowan University’s (ECU’s) human ethics policy, guidelines, and legislation. David B. Resnik (2011) articulates that the aim of research endeavour is to promote knowledge, truth, and the avoidance of error. The pitfalls he notes can certainly apply to the present research, such as:

- Differing recollections of events when dates as well as perceptions may not coincide.
• Varying interpretations of what has been said on particular subjects.
• The creative element resulting from the use of metaphor and an auto-ethnographical approach, which should not detract from values such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness.

Resnik (2011) also suggests that care must be taken to avoid falsifying, fabricating, or misrepresenting research data.

The issue of ethical behaviour relies on my integrity as a researcher and my adherence to ethical principles. I am aware that it is essential to acknowledge co-authorship, copyright, data sharing policies, and confidentiality. The participants have been informed that every care will be taken to ensure their data will be protected in a locked filing cabinet. The consenting participants observed the formalities: consent forms have been signed and care has been taken to protect them from any foreseeable harm. The ethical considerations of this research appear to have little risk, and “a thoughtful and knowledgeable approach has guided the process” (Resnik, 2011, p. 65). Respect and courtesy are the most important aspects to be shown. The participants are my close colleagues and were pleased to assist with this project. The research methods and procedures on how to act in the event of a complex issue were planned in advance. All of the participants are adults, ranging from young adults to mature individuals, who are assured that I am interested in their experiences and will portray them accurately and truthfully. The results of this research, with their agreement, will be shared with others in this profession. Resnik (2011) notes that “attention to the ethics of an investigation requires extra thought and effort but the payoff for a study that is both methodologically intact and ethically sound is extremely exhilarating” (p. 56).

Summary

A qualitative methodology and an auto-ethnographical approach were adopted to encapsulate the individuality of the study participants—relating the lives and experiences of those who have lived through this period. The study has sought to emphasise ethnicity, with the cultural, social, and political perspectives of all the protagonists. The methods used were interviews, focus groups, personal communications, thematic coding, and narrative analysis. The experiences of some of the most successful exponents in this field are examined from both a personal and professional perspective. Knowledge of the first generation of teachers was recovered from reputable archival sources and from interview participants. Coding ensured that the necessary attention and rigour were applied to the selection of material and the order
and sequence in which it was written. This was complemented by narrative analysis, weaving material relating to five threads of knowledge into this historical tapestry. Finally, the ethical considerations have been understood and applied.

The next chapter will review the international and national literature on the teaching of classical ballet technique. The following themes were defined to address the research questions: historical background, dance organisations, health and safety in dance, music in relation to dance, and males in dance.
Chapter two: Literature review

The literature reviewed in this chapter conveys how the art of ballet has progressed through the ages from its evolution in Europe to its English legacy and the Western Australian experience. The pedagogic contribution of dance organisations, care of a dancer’s body, and the relationship of music to ballet are pertinent themes. This review forms a foundation for the interpretation of research data and reflects on a body of writing that has influenced dance practice in Perth from 1950. Little information was available on the history of the teaching profession at that time and even less on pedagogical knowledge and training of dancers.

The European legacy is summarised from pre-historic times, ancient Greece and the Renaissance in the sixteenth century, where dance flourished in the courts of the reigning princes in the “squabbling” states of Italy (Anderson, 1992, p. 23), through to early twentieth-century Europe. The English legacy covers developments from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. The evolving fortunes of the male dancer are discussed in light of biographies of artists whose successful careers give credence to the idea that ballet performance is the motivation for learning the important technical skills required.

The European legacy

Knowledge of Europe’s history provides a basis and a focus for this thesis. Material from ancient civilisations is briefly discussed, before concentrating on ballet’s development from the Renaissance (sixteenth century) and the Baroque (seventeenth century) to the Classical and Romantic eras (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) (Lee, 2002, p.v). From different perspectives, Ivor Guest’s (1960) The Dancers Heritage, Jack Anderson’s (1992) Ballet and Modern Dance, Carol Lee’s (2002) Ballet in Western Culture, and Elisabeth Minden’s (2005) The Ballet Companion outline historical events that have guided the art of ballet through the ages to the position it holds in the twenty-first century.

Guest (1960) alludes briefly to humankind’s early history but states that it would not be possible to trace the origins of dance. Lee (2002) presents her view on the importance of dance in society from cave paintings, Egyptian hieroglyphics, descriptions of ancient Olympic games, and the Old Testament, describing this period of human evolution as the “earliest seeds” (p. xi), an expression that connects with the metaphor used in this thesis. She states that ancient civilisations expanded their use of dance as part of “general education, festival games, military training and theatrical entertainment” (Lee, 2002, p. 2). Anderson
(1992) asserts that the study of dance history must also include some examination of the social and cultural background from which choreographic styles emerge, as “to study the way people dance, usually involves studying the way they think and live” (p. 3). To understand how social mores influenced cultural activities, it would be necessary to trace the origins of dance beyond the beginnings of Western civilisation, which is beyond the scope of this research. Anderson (1992) refers to these times as “glimpses of the past” (p. 13), while Guest (1960) prefers the term “mists of prehistoric time” (p. 1); both agree that the most influential ancient Western civilisation was that of Greece. The Greeks believed that dance was divinely inspired and guarded by Terpsichore, one of the nine muses who protected the arts; consequently, the art of dance played an important role in “religion, education and the theatre” (Anderson, 1992, p. 15). Lee (2002) analyses beauty based on Friedrich Nietzsche’s analysis of Greek culture that all artworks consist of Apollonian and Dionysian phenomena. The former reflects ideals of ordered perfection, while the latter reflects the irrational and passionate nature of the god of wine. These characteristics, according to Lee (2002), are found in the ballets of Giselle, Sleeping Beauty, Les Sylphides, and Apollo.

Building on the philosophies of the Greeks and their attachment to dance, Guest (1960) describes late Renaissance Italy and states that it is at this point that the art of the theatre called ‘ballet’ emerged. At a time when England was still struggling with warring factions, new lines of thought, “which we call humanism” were being explored in southern Europe (Guest, 1960, p. 1). Thinkers of the time were more concerned with the affairs of humankind rather than the abstract ideas that concerned the previous school of thinkers (Guest, 1960). The new learning gave people a sense of self-esteem (Lee, 2002). As a result, there was “astonishing progress being made not just in philosophy but in every branch of human endeavour” (Guest, 1960, p. 1), including the arts. Italy, though still a patchwork of states, was the region where these ideas first developed. The rulers of these states were skilled in intrigue and diplomacy, and they made every effort to produce magnificent “balli or balletti” at their courts in order to foster their own prestige (Guest, 1960, p. 3).

Lee (2002) specifies that a likely catalyst for political connections between the Italian states and France manifested itself as a royal marriage between rulers who eventually became patrons of a flourishing culture. In Italian culture, music was the dominant art because of “the experiments in mathematical theory and its relation to sound” (Lee, 2002, p. 28). From these experiments, artisans produced a large number of musical instruments: the organ (c. 1400), the violin, double base, and harpsichord (c. 1500). The strong cultural connection between a
unified Italy and France is understood with the realisation that the Italian word *ballare* is the origin of the French word *ballet* (Anderson, 1992). Productions of grandeur produced images of power and authority with politics and society being as much a part of this process as the activity of dance (Anderson, 1992).

The European kings and princes provided splendid court occasions for the leisureed classes to enjoy until the physical activity of dancing was elevated to the art of classical ballet performed only by professional dancers (Guest, 1960). Catherine de Medici, the great-granddaughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent, on her marriage to Henri II of Valois (Lee, 2002) encouraged the assimilation of Italian culture, which over time resulted in the phenomenon of *ballet de cour*. Originally termed *Magnifiques*, the *ballet de cour* continued to gain in popularity through the efforts of the Italian Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx, who according to Guest (1960), “was the finest violinist in Christendom” (p. 5). From the time of his arrival in France in 1555, he was in charge of training dancers, organising and producing royal entertainment, as well as replicating Italian ideas and scale (Lee, 2002). Choreography was developed by Beaujoyeulx during the reign of Catherine’s son Henri III (1551–1589).

*Magnifiques* included dances such as the *Pavane* and *Galliard*, which were performed by competent amateurs (Lee, 2002). It is possible that an element of theatricality was introduced in social dances as a result of the propagation of ballet. Anderson (1992) posits that the most popular ballroom dance of the time, the Minuet or *Menuet*, had an element of flirtation, “the way the lady and gentleman continually moved apart and together” (p. 51), and that this was reflected in the arrangement of the dance. Another important invention was the *Estampie*, a couple dance that contrasted with the previous dances mentioned. It required male dancers to present the charms of their partners to an audience, and in doing so found a focal point. The *Estampie* was “the seminal form of ballet as a form of Western theatrical dance” (Lee, 2002, p. 18), leading to the innovation of the proscenium arch. Dancers were required “to master the finer points of deportment, posture and technique” (Anderson, 1992, p. 51), as these technical refinements were essential in formal productions. The extraordinary entertainments known as *ballet de cour* were danced exclusively by aristocratic amateurs instructed by professional dance masters (Koegler, 1977); no longer was dance seen as a personal activity.

Anderson (1992) claims productions of this nature were not only spectacular but contained moral significance. One such splendid event was the royal marriage of Marguerite de Lorraine to the Duc de Joyeuse. *Le Ballet Comique de la Reine, or The Dramatic Ballet of the Queen* (Lee, 2002), was a joyous ballet based on the legend of Circe. Its moral significance
was displayed by how her magic powers as a witch subdued the behaviour of her subjects. Anderson (1992) remarks that it is “regarded as the most important early attempt to create an extended choreographic spectacle but only vaguely resembled anything now associated with that term” (p. 32). Lee (2002) notes that ballet generally was seen as “a political, philosophical and ethical mirror of its day” (p. 44). Productions for the ballet de cour during the reigns of several French kings were used for political and recreational purposes until Louis XIV’s early retirement (Guest, 1960) from dance performance in 1670. Anderson (1992) explains that “perhaps Louis had taken to heart a quotation in Racine’s play Britannicus about Nero flaunting himself in public and decided that though only in his early thirties it was time to stop” (p. 44).

Dance in the French court during the Baroque age prospered as a gentlemanly activity, with Louis XIV engaging in performances of such opulence that his authority and power over his subjects were confirmed (Anderson, 1992). Ballet prospered, resulting in the development of a new discipline, balletic pedagogy, underpinned by the notion that an aristocratic bearing is essential for balletic deportment; the international use of the French language for balletic terminology continues to this day (Minden, 2005, p. 44). Louis continued to love ballet and desired that the art survive; the establishment of the Paris Opéra made it possible for the development of the totally professional dancer. Rigorous training was now required to achieve the standard necessary for ballet as a form of employment.

Minden’s (2005) tour de force vignettes reiterate that Louis XIV, ‘The Sun King’, took the evolution of ballet a step further. His understanding of the benefits of schooling prompted him to establish L’Académie Royale de Danse in 1661, where a system of professional dance training was created. Minden (2005) suggests that this was an incentive for the fundamentals of ballet to be taught with care and precision. Ballet teaching became standardised by the late eighteenth century, when steps were codified, the five positions of the feet defined, and turnout introduced. Anderson (1992) states that turnout was an adaptation of the fencer’s stance, as “dancing masters discovered that turnout helped the dancer to increase flexibility and balance while permitting the body to open out to the audience” (p. 43).

Anderson (1992) states that, as early as 1570, these theories were promulgated by the Académie de Musique et de la Poésie. Instigators of the academy were inspired to continue with their vision of theatre as a composite form uniting the separate disciplines of poetry, music, dance, and stage design. Almost a century later, there was considerable division among the leading figures at court over the directives of the institution (Lee, 2002). Jean
Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV’s financial minister, left the musicians out of Letters Patent in 1658 and in effect released dance from being in the service of music. In 1661, Letters Patent were drawn up with 12 articles of directives for L’Académie Royale de Danse. As a result, 13 dancing masters were announced as members of the academy; their purpose was to enforce precise rules for maintaining high standards in the teaching of the danse d’école. Lee (2002) explains that the concepts of danse d’école emerged from an accumulation of ideas from medieval and Renaissance times, while another definition explains “schooled dancing that follows time honoured and strict rules for the execution of specific poses and steps” (p. 78). These rules formed the beginning of pedagogy for the training of the professional dancer.

Guest (1960) and Lee (2002) agree that the Italian connection at the French court was continued with the arrival of two ambitious choreographers, Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687) and Pierre Beauchamp (1631–1705). Prestige and power came their way at the Paris Opéra and with this opportunity these two prolific choreographers made greater creativity possible in the arts, as “Italianate know-how was assimilated with French taste” (Lee, 2002, p. 55). Under the aegis of increasing centralised power, the French monarchy provided the “best breeding ground” for the development of ballet (Lee, 2002, p. 55).

Guest (1960) explains that during the Classical and Romantic eras, there was a change of content and style in the manner of performance and how it was taught, and a change from an obsession with form to “feeling and warmth” (p. 34) as the most important elements in choreography and consequently emphasised in the classroom. Guest (1960) recounted changes that occurred in choreographic styles and how eminent teachers such as the Italian Carlo Blasis responded to them. Blasis is described as a remarkable expert on many subjects, but his importance lies in his work as a teacher and his efforts to improve teaching methods. Guest (1960) claims that Blasis codified the technique of his time in 1820 in his text: Elementary, Theoretical and Practical Treatise of the Art of the Dance. Until this theoretical codification had been completed, teachers had passed information on by word of mouth and demonstration. Lee (2002) discusses how The Code of Terpsichore, Blasis’ magnum opus on dance in 1828, became a standard for ballet instruction, and gave rise to the principles of “balance, placement, alignment, centeredness and turnout” (p. 147). The aristocracy and master teachers had a significant impact on the development of ballet.

Minden (2005) reiterates that the legacy of male dancers began with the French tradition of males performing in the ballet de cour. It is significant that all the personalities discussed so far have been male; however, with the opening of the professional theatre at the Paris Opéra,
women were able to have careers in dance (Anderson, 1992). At that time, the rapidly developing balletic technique enabled the creation of three categories of dance styles for both genders, with the danse noble considered the highest—“an exponent of this style being serious and dignified on stage” (Anderson, 1992, p. 53). Anderson (1992) explains that exponents of demi-caractére dancing were “livelier and extroverted” (p. 53); Lee (2002) notes that they “displayed a skilled vigour” (p. 79), whereas the comique or grotesque style was used to portray comic or rustic roles.

The eighteenth century witnessed theatrical dance, which grew in technical knowledge consistent with the scientific spirit of the era (Lee, 2002) and was reflected in the supremacy of the male dancer. Anderson (1992) argues that this was evident in the person of Gaetan Vestris, nicknamed “the god of dance” and noted for his danse noble style in which he gave more freedom to elegant poses (p. 24). He was Italian born but trained in France and, together with his son, Antoine, were examples of successful male dancers.

On the Romantic ballet in the nineteenth century, Anderson (1992) explains specific elements termed “sunshine and moonshine” (p. 75) as “realism and fantasy” (p. 77). Minden (2005) confirms that the role of the male dancer changed from one of primary importance to mere support for the ballerina. As their fortunes dimmed, the male dancers’ roles were danced by pretty women. Minden (2005) and Lee (2002) assert that in spite of this decline, Filippo Taglioni, Auguste Bournonville, Jules Perrot, and Arthur Saint Leon held the most powerful positions as principal male dancers, choreographers, and artistic directors. Lee (2002) elaborates that masks signalled the practice of dancing en travestie and were used to create the illusion of transcending the human condition. Men specialising in dancing female roles also wore masks (Lee, 2002) until the situation was reversed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Anderson (1992) follows another path, that of the cross fertilisation and nomadic lifestyle of dancers. In the eighteenth century, French masters began travelling to other centres of ballet such as Denmark and Russia where their performance and choreographic skills were in high demand (Minden, 2005). Christian Johansson from Denmark travelled to Russia. He was a student of Auguste Bournonville and carried the edicts of his teacher “not for pleasure only” in his practice, as he believed that “dance should ennoble and uplift as well as please” (Minden, 2005, p. 82). Jules Perrot and Marius Petipa rank with Bournonville as the great choreographic geniuses of the nineteenth century (Anderson, 1992, p. 104). Petipa believed that the dance came first: he used plot and drama in the service of pure dance (Minden, 2005,
Italian masters such as Carlo Blasis (1797–1878) were engaged in developing technical skills, producing virtuoso steps of startling brilliance. Blasis was inspired by the statue of the winged Mercury by Giovanni Bologna and adapted the position as a balletic pose, termed ‘attitude’ (Minden, 2005).

Anderson (1992) describes how in the nineteenth century two prominent ballerinas of the Romantic age, Marie Taglioni and Fanny Elssler, ushered in one of the most crucial developments in ballet history, the technique of pointe work. Guest (1960) writes that the philosophies of the age “breathed new vitality into every form of art in the early 19th century” (p. 34) and pointe technique was a natural expression of lightness, enabling choreographers to produce effects of a “more poetic and supernatural nature” (p. 36). Lee (2002) reveals that the emergence of ballet at that time was “a perfect expression of Romanticism” and its extraordinary expansion on Russian soil achieved “a supreme level of excellence” (p. xi).

Events of the twentieth century encouraged the cross fertilisation of Russian dancers to Europe, reversing the trend with the contribution of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. Familiar names like Anna Pavlova, Vaslav Nijinsky, and Tamara Karsavina embellished Anderson’s (1992) script. Guest (1960) describes them as “glamorous, exotic and excitingly bohemian” (p. 65). At the opening of the Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes in Paris, 1909, Nijinsky showed there was likely to be a change in status of the male dancer because “he created a sensation with his soaring elevation, astonishing lightness and his mysterious Slavonic allure” (Guest, 1960, p. 70). Several Russian ballerinas, including Olga Preobrajenska and Lubov Egorova, left their homeland and opened ballet schools in Paris. The history of WA connects with that of Europe here, as Wilson and Bousloff studied with Preobrajenska and Egorova in Paris.

In contrast to Guest (1960), Anderson (1992), and Lee (2002), Minden (2005) notes on the opening page that her text is a dancer’s guide to the “technique, traditions and joys of ballet” (p. xv). The practical aspects, such as how to be a dancer, getting started, and getting serious are considered, followed by ballet basics and ballet class, the healthy dancer, and ballet literacy, including information pertaining to pedagogical knowledge—the hows and whys of teaching the art of classical ballet that have been codified and refined. Minden (2005) confirms that since this pedagogical development, the Paris Opéra has been one of the most successful ballet companies in the world with an affiliated school.

The nomadic lifestyle and influence of male dancers in the twentieth century are explored by two biographies and an autobiography of three great exponents of classical ballet: Nureyev
(Watson, 1994), Baryshnikov (Aria, 1989), and Panov (Panov & Feifer, 1978). The authors address the difficulties facing young Russian men in dance in the twentieth century. The political situation in their homeland made it necessary to chart their fortunes in other centres of ballet, emphasising the nomadic lifestyle of a professional dancer. All three texts unequivocally state that these male dancers encouraged a huge following for ballet internationally.

After detailing this Russian background, Anderson (1992) turns his attention to America, describing the relatively short history of its balletic experience from the many French émigrés at the end of the eighteenth century to the arrival of George Balanchine from the USSR in the twentieth century. Formerly a choreographer of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, Balanchine was persuaded by Lincoln Kirstein to join him in America to direct a new school and company. This was the beginning of the New York City Ballet and ballet in America. Lee (2002) details the American experience and the history of ballet on the east coast of Australia; there is no mention of the Western Australian experience that is relevant to this research.

**The English legacy**

The English experience is described by Mary Clarke and Clement Crisp (1973), Derek Parker (1995), Lynn Fisher (1992), Cyril Beaumont (1929), and Arnold Haskell (1938). Clarke and Crisp (1973) assert that ballet in England is “celebrated, popular and influential” (p. 163), but this has not always been so. Lee (2002) suggests that the first indication of an interest in ballet in England might have been demonstrated through the activities of John Weaver (1673–1760). His influence as a dancer, teacher, and choreographer confirm his dominance in the dance profession in England at the turn of the eighteenth century. Among his writings, he identified four categories of dance movements—bending, stretching, turning and jumping—noting that they are “to dance like light and shade are to painting” (Lee, 2002, p. 93). In England, unlike Europe, there was no Royal patronage or enthusiasm for ballet at the court of the British monarchy. According to Clarke and Crisp (1973), the reigning monarch, Queen Victoria (1837–1901), “doted on the charming ballets of the romantic period,” but took it for “granted that all participants were from the continent” (p. 163). The dancing favoured at this time was either “an extravaganza in the music halls” (Clarke & Crisp, 1973, p. 163), or a ballerina visiting from Europe. Anderson (1992) states that Danish ballerina Adeline Genée was a popular favourite for a decade. Genée was destined to become the first president of the RAD and a Dame of the British Empire. Later, the English dancers Phyllis Bedells and Anton
Dolin took on her mantle; their dancing was the staple fare presented to the ballet public (Parker, 1995). Even so, according to Anderson (1992), no one thought to establish a ballet school or company, as many people seemed to feel that dancing was “best left to the Russians or French” (p. 205). A golden age of dance may have been ushered in later in the twentieth century when most major cities in England had dance companies, each dancing with their own “stylistic accent” (Anderson, 1992, p. 205).

Events such as the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and the demise of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes were the likely reasons for several European dancers to settle in England, providing much inspiration and influence and introducing more substantial knowledge to the development of classical ballet technique and its pedagogical background (Parker, 1995). Two leading personalities were Dame Ninette de Valois (1898–2001) and Dame Marie Rambert (1888–1982). De Valois was Irish born, coming to England after the death of her father. She trained with well-known teachers Edouard Espinosa, Enrico Cecchetti, and Nicolas Legat (Clarke & Crisp, 1973), who had moved to England from France, Italy, and Russia, respectively. After leaving the Diaghilev Company in 1925, de Valois began teaching in England, founding the Academy of Choreographic Art (Anderson, 1992). She was assisted in opening a school and building a company by Lillian Baylis, founder of the Old Vic and Sadler’s Wells Ballet Company (Clarke & Crisp, 1973). Her efforts were rewarded in 1956 when her company, Sadler’s Wells Ballet, received a Royal Charter and became the world-renowned Royal Ballet of Great Britain (Anderson, 1992). The Royal Ballet School began in humble conditions in 1926 (Manchester & Morley, 1949), and has been a residential school combining general education and vocational training since 1955. The lower school is at White Lodge, Richmond, and the upper school has been housed in a newly constructed complex opposite the Royal Opera House since 2003 (The Royal Ballet School, 2008).

Marie Rambert, born in Poland, was a prominent teacher, choreographer, and artistic director of the Rambert Ballet Company. Her initial training was in Dalcroze eurhythmics, a method of rhythmic analysis that enabled her to assist Nijinsky in analysing the score of Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring (Anderson, 1992, p. 208). After her professional career as a dancer with the Ballets Russes, she opened a school of ballet in London (Anderson, 1992). The “abysmal standard” of ballet schools appalled her, as she witnessed “little girls of three or four put into hard, real ballet shoes and running about on pointe with contorted legs” (Parker, 1995, p. 2).

A few enthusiasts felt that British ballet would benefit from the establishment of a teaching association to guide the local teachers (Clarke & Crisp, 1973). Consequently, an Association
of Teachers of Operatic Dancing of Great Britain was formed in 1920 by Philip J. S. Richardson (1875–1973), editor of *The Dancing Times*, and Edouard Espinosa (1871–1950), “the foremost teacher of the day” (Clarke & Crisp, 1973, p. 16). Richardson hoped that the association “would be determined to raise the standards of teaching and abolish the effects of poor teaching” (as cited in Parker, 1995, p. 4). The term ‘operatic dance’ was used because it “was synonymous with classical as used on the continent; in England, classical dancing more commonly meant Greek dancing” (Parker, 1995, p. 3). This Greek style of dancing was demonstrated through the work of Lily Grove, Ruby Ginner, and Irene Mawer in the early twentieth century and centres on the ideals of ancient Greece. Ginner saw Greek dancing as an expression of beauty and a rejection of the “dances of angst” emanating from Germany and America (as cited in Fisher, 1992, p. 54).

According to Ginner, “the desire to dance is now stronger than the desire to see dance” (as cited in Fisher, 1992, p. 12) and the women who participated “did it for themselves not an audience” (p. 55). Fisher (1992) observes that much of the literature in this period was written by males who patronised the work of women. Arnold Haskell (1903–1980) and Cyril Beaumont (1891–1976) were concerned with the glamour and science of ballet and evaluated the movements on how they looked. Beaumont (2011) asserts that he and Haskell were devoted to the Russian ballet and wanted English ballet to flourish in the same way. Haskell (1938) observed that effeminacy in the 1930s had become “a bad tradition during the last twenty years and the effect of the female teacher was detrimental to the way in which males moved” (p. 162).

Parker (1995) documents the classical ballet scene in England from 1920 to 1995, which leads to an understanding of the development of its teaching profession. In Parker’s (1995) view, there were good dancers at the time, but it was clear to most people in the profession “that there might be more if the country possessed better teachers or rather if the good teachers were promoted and encouraged” (p. 2). According to Edouard Espinosa, the teachers in England did not “know the rudiments” (as cited in Parker, 1995, p. 2), but the introduction of examinations was instrumental in observing the detail of technique required for excellence in a student’s performance and for improving teaching standards. Examinations were a way to eliminate the abomination known as fancy dancing, which Espinosa described as the “dancing of those who fancy they can but can’t” (as cited in Parker, 1995, p. 13).

Another influential personality was Audrey de Vos, whose ideas reached the far distant shores of Israel, America, and Australia. Dina Shmueli (2001) writes that her method was
considered by some dance authorities to oppose the views of the dance establishment: “De Vos saw the individual as a unique creation with its own personal beauty who should not attempt to resemble someone else” (p. 127). Jessica Zeller’s (2009) essay, based on an interview with American Maggie Black, includes significant mention of de Vos, stating:

her progressive ideas and her ballet classes were infused with anatomically based principles at a time when much ballet training was based solely on aesthetic demands with little consideration for the long term healthy maintenance and fine tuning of a dancer’s bodily instrument. (p. 58)

Recent articles in Dance Research: The Journal of the Society of Dance Research examine problems affecting the dance community in England. Sandra Noll Hammond’s (1995) research discusses the narrative of Léopold Adice as a source of ballet’s technical heritage, while Richard Glasstone’s (1983) insights reveal how dance training in the English context responded to the demands of choreographers. The evolving traditions of dance vocabulary and training in England were transferred to Perth through the overseas experiences of dance practitioners such as Linley Wilson, Joan Stacy, and Dorothy Fleming.

**Western Australian context**

**Historical background**

The review of literature on the Western Australian context includes the influence of dance organisations on professional teaching practices; the acquisition of anatomical knowledge; the relationship of music to dance; and how such knowledge informed teachers in Perth about the discriminating factors in the teaching of ballet to male and female students.

Lynn Fisher (1992) and Joan Pope (2014) have written comprehensively about the early days of ballet and dance in WA. Fisher (1992) suggests that the dance community of WA rose from the ground in similar conditions to those in England. Ken Spillman (1998) offers information on the establishment and development of institutions in Perth.

During the 1950s, Perth, despite being the capital city of the state, had the atmosphere of a small country town, its isolation contributing to its character. In 1988, the Australian writer, dancer, and choreographer, Russell Dumas, explained WA’s strong connection with England, stating “Australia has always been a colony of England as far as dance is concerned” (as cited in Fisher, 1992, p. 1). As recently as the end of last century, observations by international writers and critics informed and influenced Western Australians. According to historian Geoffrey Blainey, Australia was isolated in a geographical sense as well as in an intellectual
or cultural sense, “isolated from what we thought was the centre of our civilisation” (as cited in Potter, 1995, p. 10).

Fisher (1992) continues that English pioneers in the nineteenth century settled along the shores of the Swan River in WA. By the early twentieth century, classical ballet or ‘concert’ dancing was an activity for young middle-class females living in the older, established suburbs of Nedlands, Cottesloe, and City Beach. In the newer, working-class suburbs, “theatrical styles of dance were taught” (Fisher, 1992, p. 3).

Inspiration for the people in these suburban areas came in the form of Russian prima ballerina Anna Pavlova (1881–1931) from St Petersburg’s Maryinsky Theatre. Pavlova travelled the world, inspiring people to dance. She studied at the Imperial School in Russia and then joined Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes in Paris. She later formed her own company (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010), and danced many small solos such as in *Le Cygne* (Figure 3) and *Autumn Bacchanale*. She described herself “as a sower of seed” (as cited in Melita, 2010, p. 12), and her exquisite dancing on her visit to Perth in 1929 encouraged many locals to participate in dance classes (Melita, 2010). No one who has seen her dance is alive, but stories such as Frederick Ashton’s abound. He was inspired to dance and choreograph by her unique qualities as a performer (Kerensky, 1973).

![Figure 3: Anna Pavlova in *Le Cygne*, c. 1909. Photograph by Schneider Berlin, 1909.](image)

The development of classical ballet in Australia is outlined by Alan Brissenden and Keith Glennon (2010), who credit Linley Wilson’s Caravan Ballet as the first performance group in WA. They also discuss WAB performances and the efforts of its first Artistic Director, Kira Bousloff. Joan Wood (2014) recounts Bousloff’s memories of the early days of WAB, which only discuss performance opportunities, rather than Bousloff’s teaching practices.
Fisher’s (1992) thesis has been a valuable resource on the role of dance teachers in WA in the early twentieth century. She states that concert dancing or ballet and theatrical dance were being taught in Perth before the designated period of the present research (1950–2016). The ballet teachers in Perth prior to 1940 and those of the first generation had a connection with England through their ancestral roots. They had studied ballet in England gaining professional teaching qualifications before taking up teaching in Perth and continuing their businesses for some decades into the latter half of the twentieth century. According to Fisher (1992), Wilson maintained the aristocratic traditions in her school from 1926 to the late 1960s; as she believed that dancing “was a serious business, her purpose was educational not professional entertainment or recreational fun” (p. 40). Fisher (1992) and Pope (1994) discuss Dorothy Fleming’s interest in Greek dancing, which she studied in England, graduating in 1940 from the Ginner-Mawer School of Dance and Drama.

The arrival of the first wave of European immigrant teachers after the Second World War provides an entry point for this research. Among the local dance community in Perth, they were referred to as ‘Russian’ although only one, Bousloff, could claim to be Russian. According to Wood (2014), Bousloff’s émigré parents were White Russians, anti-Bolsheviks who escaped before the Russian revolution in 1917 to settle in Monte Carlo (Hough, 2016). In a mass exodus, other anti-Bolsheviks moved to Berlin and Paris in Europe, Harbin in China, and from there to America and Australia. They found that adjusting to a new language, culture, and country was difficult. Nadine Wulffius, Janina Cunovas, and Marina Berezowsky settled in Perth; in this thesis, they are referred to as European, but they were from the former Soviet states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine, respectively. The last of this group, Gunhild Sobkowiak-Ferris, was an Austrian who came to Australia with her Polish husband in 1952. These five protagonists form the first generation of teachers from Europe.

Spillman (1998) deals exclusively with the historical background of the Graduate College of Dance established in Perth in 1973. He includes the visits of European master teachers from the 1980s and 1990s, and Charlesworth’s decision to change her method of training from the RAD to the Vaganova Method. Unfortunately, there is no mention of how teaching practices achieved the standards required for this success at a professional level.

Even when institutions of this calibre had been established, the male dancer in Perth was a rarity and the male teacher even more so. Michelle Potter (2011) writes that when Ted Shawn visited Perth in 1947, little attention was given to the effeminate quality of male dancing. At the time, however it was unlikely that “any boys would be in the classes” (Fisher, 1992, p. 3).
Potter (2011) and Fisher (1992) reveal the community attitudes circulating in Perth and their effects on the participation of males in dance.

**Dance organisations in Perth**

The first generation of teachers researched for this thesis based their teaching practice on the systems of Cecchetti Australia, the RAD, and the Commonwealth Society of Teachers of Dancing (CSTD), all of which began in England and were operational in Perth by 1950. The history of the RAD has been well served by Parker’s (1995) account. Its founders were Danish ballerina Adeline Genée, representing the Bournonville school; Tamara Karsavina, prima ballerina from St Petersburg, representing the Imperial Russian school; Edouard Espinosa, representing the French school; and Lucia Cormani as the Italian influence. Phyllis Bedells, as prima ballerina, danced at the Empire Theatre in London from 1907 to 1917 (Koegler, 1977) and represented a very young English ballet culture, where her valuable experience as a performer was an attribute (Parker, 1995). The role of the RAD has always been to assist teachers and maintain the standards of dance teaching by establishing a system of examination. At a meeting in London in 1920, it was agreed that the association should consist of probationers and members. Any professional teacher could become a probationer upon approval by the committee and payment of an annual subscription. This format has changed little, if at all, over the years (Parker, 1995). Fisher’s (1992) research reveals that fancy dancing continued to be taught in Perth even after the introduction of the RAD in 1931. Fisher (1992) explains why the establishment of the English dance societies promoted ballet in Perth, examining the roles of gender and class in the community and how the growing participation of men and the lack of emphasis on class structure influenced the growth of dance activities. Fisher (1992) and Cruickshank (1989) explain how the connection with these societies gave credibility to the expertise of the profession, as English qualifications were admired by the general populace. Fisher (1992) claims that the interest in dance societies was an outcome of the middle-class preoccupation with the natural sciences, advocated as a necessary component in the education of WA. The Education Department policy of the period recognised the importance of health and fitness; for young women, dance, whether classical or theatrical, complemented this policy. Graceful movement and pleasing posture promoted the image of “virgins” (Fisher, 1992, p. 4), which was especially appropriate for debutante balls and presentations at Government House, the aspirations of middle-class mothers for their daughters in the upwardly mobile society of that time.
In the television documentary *Ballerina*, presented by Natalia Makarova (1987), the English style is described as consisting of “gentleness, restraint and modesty.” It was this refinement that the first generation of the English lineage endeavoured to cultivate in the local students. This was particularly noted by the RAD examiners who were trained in the required English style, which was influenced by the demands of Sir Fredrick Ashton, a prominent English choreographer. The examiners were teachers themselves and sent from the headquarters in London to Europe, America, South Africa, Asia, and Australia. It has recently changed to include examiners of varying ethnic backgrounds, but mostly female. It was expected that the examination of students would encourage teachers to improve their knowledge of teaching. A vocational syllabus was offered and seen as an opportunity for students with a commitment to study the art and/or a desire to dance professionally.

Over the years, artistic directors of the RAD have changed the system from a comprehensive teaching method to one of examination, as advertised on syllabus material produced both for the graded and vocational syllabi. There are currently two levels in the Vocational Examination system. Intermediate level is divided into two examinations, Intermediate Foundation and Intermediate. The Advanced levels consist of Advanced Foundation, Advanced One, and Advanced Two. These examinations have progressed through several iterations, finally providing the teacher with material covering barre work, port de bras and centre practice with pirouettes, adage, allegro, and pointe work. A choice is given between a classical style or a neo-classical/contemporary balletic style. The material offered (RAD, 2002) is for both male and female students. The current specification states that the qualification for the Solo Seal, set originally in 1928, “is commensurate with those required of a dancer embarking on a professional career” (RAD, 1968, 1986, 2014, 2017).

The principles and practice of the RAD are documented in *The Foundations of Classical Ballet Technique* (RAD, 1997), which details in words and diagrams the basic positions and movements. *The Progressions of Classical Ballet* has illustrations of advanced vocabulary determined by the RAD (2002). Information on examinations is presented in publications that focus explicitly in that area. DVDs and CDs have been produced as “aide memoirs” for teachers (Royal Academy of Dance Enterprises Limited, 2017). Examiners are trained to base their results on criteria encompassing technical, musical, and performance skills.

Literature pertinent to this research also comes from the second organisation, Cecchetti Ballet Australia, formed under the auspices of the English Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance (ISTD) founded in 1924 (Fisher, 1992), which became autonomous in 1987 (Cecchetti Ballet
Australia Inc., 2017). After the death of Enrico Cecchetti—an Italian performer of great renown—his method was codified and documented by Cyril Beaumont, Stanislas Idzikowsky, Margaret Craske, and Derra de Moroda. Cecchetti’s essential theoretical principles of classical ballet are recorded in A Manual of the Theory and Practice of Classical Theatrical Dancing (Beaumont & Idzikowsky, 1956). His methods were intended to be used by ballet teachers to perfect technique and encourage artistic presentation. Those wishing to enter the profession or just to enjoy dancing for pleasure would benefit from his philosophies. The manual describes several steps and gestures that belong specifically to this system, along with the principles of grace, balance, and line, which form the basis of a sound training syllabus developed to meet the needs of modern children—teaching coordination, poise, rhythmical sense and musicality while ensuring that the process is still fun (Cecchetti Ballet Australia Inc., 2017). Cecchetti directly connects with the lineage of Carlo Blasis and Auguste Bournonville. Cecchetti’s artistic philosophies “elevate the soul” (Bruhn & Moore, 1961, p. 26) and his insistence that the student be “capable of executing all the exercises, even the most difficult, with ease, grace, facility, strength and precision” are principles of this discipline (Bruhn & Moore, 2005, p. 66). Cecchetti “sought to systematise the arm positions to match the positions of the feet; however, the artist in him stressed the importance of the movement dynamics linking those positions” (Glasstone, 1983, p. 62).

The CSTD was founded by Dorothy Gladstone in Melbourne in 1933. Soon afterwards, it was thriving in the northern suburbs of Perth (CSTD, 1933). Xenia Borovansky began a second system of teaching called the Borovansky Method, just after she and her husband, Edouard, arrived in Australia in 1938 (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010). It has an examination system with levels for young children up to Solo Seal standard and is currently delivered by the Australian Institute of Classical Dance (AICD; 2017).

The Vaganova method of teaching was devised in 1934 with the publication of Agrippina Vaganova’s Basic Principles of Classical Ballet; the fourth edition was published in 1969. The contribution made by those associated with Russian ballet was critically interpreted and systemised in the Soviet period (Vaganova, 1969). In the introduction, V. Chistyakova (1969), a Russian ballet coach and writer, states:

> even then it was evident that the book’s significance far exceeded the bounds of a teaching manual. The method expounded in it for teaching classical ballet represented a remarkable contribution to the theory and practice of the balletic art, a summation of the achievements of Soviet choreographic instruction. (p. v)
Chistyakova (1969) continues that Vaganova’s “first conclusions were drawn from a comparison of two systems of ballet teaching the French and Italian schools that served the Russian stage at the end of the 19th century” (p. vi). The former traditions were taught by Nicholas Legat and Pavel Gerdt (Minden, 2005). Gerdt’s teacher was Christian Johansson whose ‘noble’ classical traditions could be traced back to the Danish choreographer, Auguste Bournonville, and further to the eighteenth-century master of the French school, Jean-Georges Noverre (Minden, 2005). Chistyakova (1969) asserts that the style of the French school was cultivated, “soft and graceful but unnecessarily artificial and decorative” (p. vii). Vaganova turned to the Italian school, with its advantages of reliable aplomb, dynamic turns, and strength and endurance on the toes very evident in the dancers produced by this system. The other aspect, the construction of the lesson, was well considered. Many instructors worked without a clear intention, but “Cecchetti had a fixed plan” (Chistyakova, 1969, p. vii). Chistyakova (1969) describes characteristics of the Italian school disliked by Vaganova as “excessive angularity of movement, strained use of the arms—now stretched out too much, now sharply bent at the elbows and a harsh manner of tucking the legs up in a jump” (p. viii). The development and systematic way of codifying the Vaganova method is well described in the literature (Golovkina, 1991; Kostrovitskaya, 2004; Vaganova, 1969).

Vera Kostrovitskaya and Andrey Pisarev’s (1978) *School of Classical Dance* explains how the structure of combinations will vary “beginning with the simplest, leading to the more complicated and perfect ones” (p. 15). *101 Lessons in Classical Ballet* (Kostrovitskaya, 2004) describes the structure of lessons with the practice beginning with combinations of barre exercises and progressing through centre practice and then to allegro and pointe sections of the class. To this day, this structure is followed almost to the letter in classes at each level of the curriculum from the first year of study to the advanced levels, years six to eight.

The Vaganova system uses the term *battement jeté* for all extensions of the leg: the movement is executed at varying tempos: half beats, one beat, and for *grand battement jeté* in one or two beats (Kostrovitskaya, 2004). Kostrovitskaya and Pisarev (1978) advise that from the third year of the programme, exercises except *battements tendus* and *ronds de jambe à terre* are taken on the demi pointe and generally in a square time signature: 2/4 or 4/4.

Exercises taken in the centre without the use of the barre are more comprehensive than in most of the other systems. Another difference is that exercises executed at the barre can also be achieved on demi-pointe and en tournant (Kostrovitskaya & Pisarev, 1978). The centre
practice begins with a petit adage then introduces combinations with different types of
pirouettes, followed by adage, allegro, or pointe work until the class is completed.

Four of the systems, Borovansky (AICD, 2000), Cecchetti (Cechetti Ballet Australia Inc.,
2017), CSTD (1933), and RAD (2017), endeavour to achieve the highest standards of
training while providing for the possibility of teaching students recreationally. The fifth, the
Vaganova method, is essentially for students who wish to become professional classical
ballet dancers and have the physicality and determination to achieve this goal, training daily
for at least five or six days a week. All the systems have similar basic movements but differ
in terminology, the numbering systems of a studio environment, and the selection of material
at each level. In the use of French terminology the RAD, Cecchetti, and Vaganova have the
most variation. An interesting example is reflected in the RAD’s and CSTD’s use of
battement tendu, glissé, and jeté to differentiate the purpose of each of these movements.
Cecchetti terms the movement as a degagé while Vaganova refers only to battement jeté for
these movements (Kostrovitskaya & Pisarev, 1978). Thus, the literature reviewed here
explains some definitive differences between the various systems that direct the standards of
the technical expertise required for both recreational and professional training. It confirms
that daily training and well-structured classes are essential to achieve an appropriate standard.
This has informed current teachers in Perth about skills that are mandatory for producing
professional dancers.

Care for the dancer’s body (or health)

One research question in this thesis focuses on the importance of dancers’ health and safety.
As long ago as the early 1930s, Wilson strove to have dance taught in the school curriculum
to ensure the fitness of all young children (as cited in Fisher, 1992). “Dancing was a serious
business, the purpose of which was education” (Fisher, 1992, p. 40), and the health and safety
of young people in any physical activity was acknowledged in the Occupational Safety and
Health Act 1984 (WA). Since then, extensive studies conducted overseas and disseminated in
publications from England and America have confirmed Wilson’s thoughts on the health
benefits of ballet for young people. An Australian study commissioned by Ausdance on Safe
Dance Practice was conducted by Tony Geeves in March 1990. Among the issues discussed
were the structure of floors used for dance training, and the importance of warming up and
cooling down sessions before class and rehearsals, all of which form important knowledge
for teachers. In a third report commissioned by Ausdance, Debra Crookshanks (1999) documents the reoccurrence of certain injuries in Australian professional dancers.

Through the period examined in this thesis, knowledge relating to the health and care of a dancers’ body has developed significantly. An early example, Celia Sparger’s (1970) *Anatomy and Ballet*, published in England, discusses the human anatomy and the impact of anomalies in physical differences on balletic skills. In the introduction, she writes that “it is not easy to say what the origin of this remarkable system was, only that it has been handed down for generations” (Sparger, 1970, p. 9). Whether these great teachers had an understanding of anatomy is uncertain, though Sparger (1970) argues that “the answer would be decidedly ‘no’” (p. 9). In the past decades, health care knowledge for dancers has grown immensely through seminal texts such as *Teaching Young Dancers* by Joan Lawson (1975), *Inside Ballet Technique* by Valerie Grieg (1994), and *Dance Kinesiology* by Sally Sevey-Fitt (1996). More recently, professional associations such as the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science (IADMS, 1990) have emerged to support dancers’ health and wellness, and there are dance health advocacy programs such as the Healthy Dancer Program supported by One Dance UK (2016). Thus, considerations for dancer health in Perth are likely to have grown as well. The present research examines how past generations of Perth ballet teachers engaged with and were informed by these global advancements.

**Music and its relationship to dance**

Echoed in dance throughout the ages are two basic rhythms of the human body: “the heartbeat is reflected in the stamping of the feet and breathing is expressed in the sung melodic phrase” (Lee, 2002, p. 1). The literature reviewed in this section identifies the close relationship between music and dance, which has been constant in human evolution. Lee (2002) begins with an example of the close connection between music and dance since prehistoric times, stating that the “rhythmic basis for dance was percussive” (p. 1), explained by the stamping of feet of primitive man into the earth to attract attention from the gods. Donald Grout’s (1960) *The History of Western Music* explores the development of Western music from the Middle Ages. *Moving Music* by Stephanie Jordan (2000) contains information on music for specific ballets, while Elisabeth Sawyer’s (1985) *Dance with the Music* discusses, among other important issues, the interaction in the classroom between pianist and ballet teacher. Pope (2008) explains the benefits of Dalcroze eurhythmics and the RAD’s publications emphasise the importance of music in the education of a dancer.
Lee (2002) examines the contribution of Jean Baptiste Lully, remembered for his knowledge of composing music for ballet as “deliberate and authoritative melodies [that] mirrored and honoured” the reign of Louis XIV (p. 73). Lully, a dancer himself, understood the natural rhythmic flow of the body and how it was possible to connect dance with similar phrasing in music. Lully’s music was “precise without undue ornamentation” (Lee, 2002, p. 4) and it was he who departed from the Renaissance propensity for time signatures in 4/4 rhythms and instead encouraged the 3/4 meter and its variants. For some time, it has been considered that a comprehensive dance education includes an in-depth study of the art of music (Lee, 2002). The literature reviewed here acknowledges the fundamental relationship of music to ballet; as with musicians, it is the responsibility of each dancer to “breathe life into the static graphic representations” (RAD, 1997, p. 5).

Grout (1960) discloses how the Greek heritage of Christian music is evident in the development of the Gregorian chant and secular songs. He explores how the rise of the national styles of Italy, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and England has affected the development of music to the present day. He also provides considerable information on the Renaissance, Romantic, and Modern periods of music. Jordan (2000) explains “that we rate musicality as one of the supreme attributes of the dancer and choreographer” (p. x) and elucidates the problem that “language rapidly becomes technical, embracing two disciplines … and certain terminology and formal concepts have to be grasped” (p. ix). Jordan (2000) aims to assist in understanding how seeing can be informed by hearing and hearing by seeing, inspired by Balanchine’s passionate utterance, “I must show them the music. Music must be seen” (as cited in Jordan, 2000, p. xiv).

The experiences of a dance accompanist working at the Julliard School in New York with choreographer Anthony Tudor form the basis of Sawyer’s (1985) Dance with the Music, which offers advice that may assist pianists to collaborate with teachers who have demanding temperaments or little experience in the field. Advice is given on whether to choose music from existing ballets or to improvise to support the physical movement with the correct dynamics. Sawyer (1985) states that Western dance approaches movement in a progressive kinetic manner as does Western music, and remarks that “dance movement is but a leaf caught up in a musical theme,” a metaphor for the relationship between the two arts (p. 21).

Music in Relation to Dance (Royal Academy of Dance Enterprises Limited, 2017) offers valuable practical information on dance rhythms such as the waltz, gallop, and march. Simple and compound time signatures are addressed, while audio recordings and pictorial images
complement the written notes. Many creative ideas are also developed in Pope’s (2008) *Dalcroze Eurhythmics in Australasia*. This method “provides the foundation for creative expression, and can be achieved by means of the body … fostering rhythm, training the ear and developing the power of improvisation” (Pope, 2008, p. 6). Knowledge of music at a more sophisticated level is essential for the ballet teacher for communication and collaboration to occur with an accompanist as well as encouraging the skill of musicality in students. This thesis charts the development of this modality, which in turn demonstrates the skills necessary for the progress of classical ballet teaching in WA.

**Summary**

The literature reviewed in this chapter reflects how scholars at the international level have devoted time to preserve and document the development of the art of ballet alongside that of balletic pedagogy. An informed picture of international and national trends has been the benchmark for continued development in the art of teaching classical ballet in WA.

Investigation of European and English historical legacies explain the influence of national, social, and cultural backgrounds on the evolution of dance from a social activity to a specialised art. The literature reviewed describes how the aristocratic lineages of Catherine de Medici and Louis XIV left their mark on classical ballet stance and movement vocabulary. The cornerstone of this style has continued to renew the classical ideals of clarity, balance, and harmony through the use of turnout and the prescribed carriage of the arms, both of which complement the vertical postural stance of the human body. In addition, the training of professional dancers and the development of the proscenium arch in the theatre further imbued the art of classical ballet. The reviewed literature explains that male supremacy in dance was apparent from early times when male dancers occupied premier positions until the nineteenth century when the focus turned to the female dancer owing to the ideals of the Romantic period and the development of pointe technique.

The dance societies have for some time disseminated material and instructions on the training of both male and female dancers. The literature revealed that the establishment of institutions in Europe and England provided opportunity for the development of pedagogical practice assisted by an understanding of the practical knowledge of anatomy. In the section on health, the reviewed literature explored new scientific knowledge that was available from certain channels in Perth. The accumulation of knowledge from various texts also informed teachers on the relationship between music and dance.
The literature establishes the foundations for future development in the teaching of this art form. The interest of this study lies in the historical development of ballet teaching in Perth. The data provided by interview participants in the following chapters indicate how the literature has directly influenced the teaching practices of today.
Chapter three: English lineage

This chapter describes the lives and professional practices of the founding classical ballet teachers of the English lineage in Perth, while chapter four describes the teachers of the European lineage. Metaphorically, the roots of the tree represent the five protagonists of the first generation of the English lineage, and the trunk represents four second-generation teachers of that lineage.

The five first-generation teachers fit under the eminent historian Geoffrey Searle’s description of Australians living far away from England, who are determined to “nourish their souls and define themselves as Australians even in the face of the tyranny of distance” (as cited in Potter, 1995, p. 10). Although their obituaries and archival records show close connections with England, either through ancestry or professional links with English dance societies, they were Australian. As Geoffrey Blainey notes, “Australia’s history had been shaped by the fact that Australians depended on England, a country that was further away from Australia than any other country you might mention” (as cited in Potter, 1995, p. 10).

The distance between the two countries did not deter the popularity of dancing in Perth with thousands of young people enrolling for classes (Fisher, 1992, p. 3), but the scarcity of money after the war money prevented some children’s participation (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016). While it is likely that one major school attracted the wealthier clientele, it would seem that other teachers in the community aimed for the less affluent market (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015).

Linley Wilson, Joan Stacy, Evelyn Hodgkinson, Shirley Halliday, and Dorothy Fleming form the English lineage. Three participants—Stevens, Cruickshank, and Meade—interviewed for this research discuss the ethnicity of these protagonists and remarked that they had looked to England for leadership and continued with the English style of classical ballet pedagogy. In addition to the interviews, two theses shed light on the practices of three of these teachers: Fisher (1992) describes the activities of Wilson, Stacy, and Fleming, and Pope (1994) elaborates on Fleming’s contribution. The chapter includes personal memories of the participants’ first-hand experiences as students, sharing perceptions of their teacher’s work, practices, and philosophies, and reflecting on how their own practice has been influenced by them. Their recollections expand our understanding of these first-generation protagonists’ contribution to the dance teaching profession.
First generation

The first-generation protagonists were born in Perth, with the exception of Joan Stacy (Pope, 1994). Fisher (1992) states that the careers of Wilson, Stacy, and Fleming began under the supervision of pre-war teachers, but continued for another 20 years until the 1960s. Where Hodgkinson and Halliday received their education and dance training is not clear, but Wilson, Stacy, and Fleming spent their formative years in the western suburbs of Perth before travelling to England for further training as ballet teachers (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015; Fisher, 1992, p. 7). After receiving classical ballet teaching qualifications from an English organisation (Cruickshank, 1989), they returned to Perth with experience and knowledge of the mechanics of teaching ballet movement and its vocabulary.

Cruickshank explains that Wilson was instrumental in bringing the RAD to Perth and establishing a prestigious school (interview, November 11, 2015). Wilson and Stacy concentrated exclusively on the RAD system of training (Fisher, 1992). Conversely, Fleming was enthralled by Greek dance at the Ginner-Mawer school in England, where she learned the dance philosophies practised by Lily Grove (Fisher, 1992). Grove suggested that classical ballet developed the muscles incorrectly, most obviously those of the legs. These ideas, which included the theories of Frenchman François Delsarte and his system called Applied Aesthetics, resonated with Fleming (Baskerville, personal communication, June 21, 2017; The Dance Thinker, 2016). On her return to Perth, she broke away from the mould established by the other prominent teachers (Pope, 1994). The order of the following sections is arbitrary, based on available information and the importance of each teacher’s contribution to the teaching of classical ballet in this state.

Linley Wilson (1898–1990) AM, FRAD

Linley Wilson’s (Figure 4) career was well established by the 1950s (Fisher, 1992, p. 151). Her father’s prominence as the Premier of WA and her connections with important figures in the Education Department was advantageous for her career path, allowing her to exercise some influence in the decision to have ballet accepted into the school curriculum (Fisher, 1992). Along with Alison Lee, Wilson was instrumental in bringing the RAD Syllabus to Australia, including Perth (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015; RAD, 2015). She encouraged other teachers to join the RAD, enabling them to use the
syllabus material of the programme (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016). Wilson’s privileged position enabled her to influence societal policy and support herself financially as she established a respected school that reflected her principles and created a relevant ethos for her students.

From the 1920s, Wilson had opportunities to travel between England and Australia. Her main intention was to study music, but she changed her mind and “had fallen in love with Russian ballet” (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). Two great ballerinas on the international stage—Tamara Karsavina in London, and Olga Preobrajenska in Paris—were Wilson’s teachers (RAD, 2015). She was also in contact with many influential figures connected with the Operatic Society of Dancing (Fisher & Bolton, 2012), which became the Royal Academy of Dancing in 1935 (Parker, 1995).

As Wilson was well educated in both music and dance, on her return to Perth in 1926 she was able to establish a reputable and influential ballet school. She chose her studios for the aesthetic appeal of the buildings. For example, she selected a convent in Adelaide Terrace on the riverside (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). The studio interiors were designed to allow space for dancers to move with freedom. Barres were attached to the walls and the floors were suitable for dancers to work safely. Cruickshank expands that “Wilson’s was the only full-time school in Perth and she provided professional training for males and females” (interview, November 11, 2015).

At that time, Wilson was able to afford high-quality facilities for her school and high-calibre pianists to play for classes. Her teaching style was also approached in this fastidious manner. Wilson insisted that students presented themselves well, ensuring that hair was styled neatly in a bun, clean shoes were worn and they appeared in well-made tutus, especially at examinations (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). She planned to develop her school on professional lines and reflect English notions of propriety. She would charge higher fees for the privilege (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). This added to the image of exclusivity, as “she was seen as a civilising influence in general not just in dance and the particular magic she offered was the transformation of Perth girls into English ladies” (Fisher, 1992, p. 215). Wilson is described as having an:

attitude that she was above everyone else—that she was superior—she knew more about it than everyone else. She would never have said it but she acted it. She would never allow her students to go to anyone else. She felt that you had to stay with her to get your style and technique under control before you started going off and taking classes where you get different ideas. (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015)
Though a curvature of the spine prevented her from demonstrating the dance vocabulary fully, she was an effective teacher who produced quality students (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). Highly analytical, she articulated instructions precisely. Cruickshank explains that Wilson’s forte in training was in “Adage and the use of Port de bras … She could not go forward with her own dancing but she really worked on the technique of others” (interview, November 11, 2015). Wilson was a disciplinarian, demanding effort and commitment from those who worked with her. It was this attention to detail that prompted Cruickshank (Figure 5) to move from Stacy to Wilson (interview, November 11, 2015).

Wilson had a far-reaching impact on her students and colleagues. Her efforts to bring about professional standards in dance began by establishing the RAD system of training in Perth (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010, p. 169). She trained several successful dancers on the international stage (Fisher & Bolton, 2012), including Alison Lee, Patricia Dyer, Renee Valent, Ronald Erceg, and Bernadette Taylor, enhancing her students’ technical excellence by encouraging artistry and musicality. The RAD is still the most popular and prominent system in Perth, with some 75 teachers following the tenets laid down by the artistic leadership of this international organisation that is headquartered in London (RAD, 2015).

Wilson encouraged her colleagues to develop their schools by promoting the RAD and to support the RAD Members Ballet Group (Figure 6). Wilson was the first president of the group, which was formed to improve performing opportunities for students across the metropolitan area to enhance their performance skills, an essential feature of any balletic
training (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010). Wilson received the President’s Award from the RAD in 1974 (Popham, 1978) and was made a Fellow for her services to the RAD. In 1978, she received an AM for her services to the arts (Fisher & Bolton, 2012). Determined, capable, and confident, Wilson established a respected school with a reputation for excellence through discipline and attention to detail. Her success created a hierarchy among the schools in Perth.

Figure 6: RAD Members Ballet Group leaflet, 1962. Collection of Diana de Vos, Claremont.

Joan Stacy (1907–1990)

Joan Stacy (Figure 7) was born in England and came to Perth as a young child. Her aunt, a ballet teacher living and working in Bristol, may have influenced Stacy to follow in her footsteps (as cited in Cruickshank, 1989). In contrast to the disciplined teaching practices of Wilson, Stacy inspired a “love of dance” in her students (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). This approach may have resulted from her own experiences as a student. She began her basic training with Mrs Ernest Rowles and later trained in London. Stacy realised that it was difficult for students to achieve without
encouragement (Cruickshank, 1989). Fortuitously, an inheritance from her father enabled her to go to London where she was introduced to Edouard Espinosa who “told me I knew nothing about ballet…. He gave me his syllabus and took me through it; no further instruction was forthcoming” (as cited in Cruickshank, 1989). Later she was taught by Ruth French, Phyllis Bedells, and Madame Judith Espinosa. In her interview with Cruickshank (1989), Stacy commented that “Phyllis corrected me until I felt I could never get anything right but Madame encouraged me.” In London, she studied for the five-hour teachers’ examination and received a ‘Commended’ pass. Stacy remembers, “I had to stand in 5th position with the body held up all the time” (as cited in Cruickshank, 1989). She ventured to Melbourne for further study, relinquished her career to marry and have two children, and then began teaching again (Cruickshank, 1989). In 1944, Stacy taught local children in makeshift conditions (as cited in Cruickshank, 1989). Cruickshank recalls that she began her lessons with Stacy hanging onto the veranda rails of a Cottesloe house (interview, November 11, 2015). Stacy’s school was open to anyone wishing to learn ballet, and as demand grew she established studios in Claremont, Attadale, Applecross, South Perth, and in Hay Street in the city centre. Stevens recollects her first experience at Locke Street Hall, Claremont, some years later:

> There were six or eight rows of ladies sitting and drinking cups of tea and knitting and talking in raucous voices. Mrs Haesler [Stacy] was up the front with the kids. The classes were huge and Mrs Haesler was taking Relaxa Tabs all day because she was forever screaming out “Mothers be quiet!” (interview, January 4, 2016)

At this stage, it was Stacy’s intention to encourage young students to enjoy this activity by allowing them to feel the movement. Stevens (Figure 8) remembers: “in my first class I skipped around in a circle, fell in love and never missed a class” (interview, January 4, 2016).

Figure 8: June Tough Stevens, c. 1950. Photograph courtesy of June Stevens.
Stacy’s classes had musical accompaniment with pianists in her suburban halls and main studio. Cruickshank explains that “Joan was far more interested in the flow and probably not too difficult music” (interview, November 11, 2015). Stevens remembers, “It was Mr Wood at the piano, belting out the music all the time and I was always happy” (interview, January 4, 2016). While some of the participants in retrospect were unhappy with the standard of technique taught, all mentioned that Stacy was “unfailingly nice to people and very warm and inclusive. She always encouraged us and her studio was a happy place to be in” (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016). “She was a really sweet lady who always appeared happy” (Asotoff, interview, December 18, 2015).

In contrast to Wilson’s professional amenities and disciplined approach, Stacy began her school in a small way, using convenient facilities until her own children grew older and she had enough students to enlarge her business and maintain it financially.

As Stacy began teaching the RAD Major syllabus, her discipline improved; however, her primary aim was still to teach young ladies deportment and manners. This approach appealed to a much larger market (Fisher, 1992). Stevens recalls that Stacy wore lovely dresses, generally lavender in colour:

> They were light and filmy with lots of petticoats underneath. When she picked them up she had on these Bombay Bloomers, we used to call them, and they came down to her knees. She generally at that stage of her career wore high heel shoes and always had her handkerchiefs. I was so impressed with her handkerchiefs, they had lace around the edges and she always smelled lovely. (interview, January 4, 2016)

Three participants suggest she was not a technician, in that she had little knowledge of the anatomical terms or understanding of the correct way to train the dancer’s body: Cruickshank recalls Stacy saying, “Gay dear, turn your knees out,” and comments that “she did not seem to understand that turn out came from the hips, she never cottoned on to that and her arms were pretty haphazard” (interview, November 11, 2015). Stevens confirms Stacy’s lack of technical knowledge, stating “Turn your foot out, that is what we were told” (interview, January 4, 2016). Meade also recalls training for RAD Intermediate and Advanced level examinations, hanging onto a windowsill at a Claremont church hall, and remarks the level of teaching she received from Stacy was not detailed: “it was really just teaching the exercise” (interview, November 17, 2015).

Nevertheless, Stacy inspired generations of students to engage in dance and her students carried the baton further. Cruickshank regrets not having told “Mrs Haesler” as she was known, how much she had done for ballet in WA (interview, November 11, 2015). Stevens
suggests that for her the three important schools in Perth were those of Wilson, Stacy, and Hodgkinson, “all totally different”:

Mrs Haesler [Stacy] was very encouraging. Linley Wilson was the lady to go for really good technique and for pushing the envelope and Evelyn Hodgkinson! Ooh I was terrified of her. She looked like a little crabby lady. I don’t know whether she was or not but that is the image that came out. (interview, January 4, 2016)

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Figure 9: Programme cover of a production by Joan Stacy School of Dancing.

Stacy was my third dance teacher and my second ballet teacher. I remember her as a diminutive woman with a sweet face and a kindly manner. She was always well dressed and I recall watching as she demonstrated movements in high-heeled shoes. Her choice of shoes displayed a pair of fine ankles and highly arched feet; attributes admired in the dance world. Her intention was for us to enjoy the movement; she did not insist upon the technical detail and seldom used imagery. Rarely did she raise her voice or get frustrated by our efforts.

After the war, Perth experienced certain hardships such as food shortages and lack of private transport so by conducting her classes in the suburbs, Stacy made it convenient for young children to access ballet classes easily. Stacy’s studio, another church hall not far from where I lived, made it possible for me to ride my bicycle. Later, as a teenager, I travelled by bus to the Hay Street studio with its green door and a staircase leading up to a large studio where much activity occurred in the evenings during the week and all day Saturday. The recitals she produced were handsome affairs, mostly her choreography and often held at His Majesty’s Theatre (Figure 9).
As a celebration of the Year of the Teacher in 2004 and as evidence of her popularity and her ability to engender a love of dance, a choreography was created, *Liaisons Danseuses* (Figure 10), in which eight teachers, seven of whom were students of Stacy’s, participated (archives of RAD Advisory Panel of WA).

Figure 10: Pose from *Liaisons Danseuses* (2004). Collection of Heather Baskerville.

**Evelyn Hodgkinson (1905–2007)**

Evelyn Hodgkinson, (Figure 11) was born in Coolgardie, WA and as her business grew, she worked in a large studio in North Perth where she taught Scottish dancing, tap, and ‘fancy dancing’ (*Bits from the Archives*, 2013). ‘Fancy dancing’ was similar in form to concert dancing or classical ballet but without the glamour of style and presentation (Parker, 1995). French ballet terminology was not used; most importantly, there was no understanding of the necessary building of technique required for professional ballet training. Fisher (1992) explains that fancy dancing also had the reputation of bad teaching, as practitioners could ruin children’s bodies through improper teaching methods. At Wilson’s urging, Hodgkinson took up classical ballet (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). David McAllister AM (personal communication, December 11, 2016), currently Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet and arguably the most famous Western Australian export in dance, remembers that Hodgkinson “taught Highland dancing in a Scout hall in Scarborough,” where he began his
training. He describes his teacher as “tough with parents” and his advice to teachers based on the example set by Hodgkinson in his formative years was “to love their students and scare the hell out of the parents” (McAllister, personal communication, December 11, 2016).

**Shirley Halliday (1932–)**

Shirley Halliday (Figure 12) began teaching at the age of 14 and opened her school in the northern suburbs, teaching the CSTD system. One former student, Gail Meade, says, “I had the utmost respect for her and I thought she was fantastic” (interview, November 17, 2015). She laid the groundwork for the theatrical dance such as tap and jazz. For tuition in ballet it was necessary to search elsewhere: “What was impressive about Halliday’s teaching formula was her attention to detail and her love of dance that drew people to her. She had a way to get the best out of her students” (interview, November 17, 2015). In the early days, there was no connection or communication between the theatrical teachers of dancing and those teaching classical ballet (Meade, interview, November 17, 2015).

**Dorothy Fleming (1914–1996) OAM**

Dorothy Fleming (Figure 13) was a fully qualified school teacher; she also studied ballet with Wilson in Perth (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). Fleming travelled to London to study at the Ginner-Mawer School of Dance and Drama, where she learned refined Greek dancing technique and the RAD system. Pope (1994) suggests what she learned was to establish another way of teaching young people “learning through joy.... She had a good understanding of contemporary educational approaches which she could apply in her specialisation.” According to Fisher (1992), Fleming learned about the creativity and beauty envisaged by Lily Grove, “not the hard-edged modernism of the Germans or Americans” (p. 343). Fleming did not like the discipline and harshness of Wilson’s teaching (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015) and did not wish to compete with her (Fisher, 1992, p. 343). She started her own school in the western suburbs of Perth. One former student, Morwenna Vincent, states that Fleming saw “dance as a way to encourage fitness in
young women and to encourage a lovely sense of movement” (personal communication, January 19, 2016). Fleming also saw this as an opportunity to encourage an interest in Greek mythology. Two important ballets performed at the Sunken Gardens, *Sadko* and *Pandora’s Box*, did exactly that (Vincent, personal communication, January 19, 2016). Jo Davies, a former student, describes Greek dancing as:

> a natural system, everything is easy. We learned to point our toes, straighten our knees and to position our arms in a round window framing our faces. We did little runs ending in a ‘poise’, a position on tiptoe with arms stretching up in a ‘V’. Tall posture came about seemingly without instruction. (as cited in Pope, 2014)

A compilation of stories written to celebrate a reunion held in honour of Dorothy Fleming by her former students notes that “dancers learned the movements in bare feet not in ballet shoes. Lots of arms and leg shapes about diagonals, horizontals and verticals. There were changes of direction in lines and taking turns at adding shapes to a group frieze” (Pope, 2014). Pope (2014) recalls that Fleming’s method fostered a choreographic element into the class structure. In an interview by Pope (2014), Morwenna Vincent notes that another of Fleming’s aims “was to give children aged four to sixteen sufficient technique to enable them to express themselves through music and to be creative.” Morwenna’s mother, Jean Vincent, was pianist for Fleming’s classes in Greek dancing and later in classical ballet, and she “supported the exercises with sympathetic music, as often as not her own improvisations” (Morwenna Vincent, as cited in Pope, 2014). Creativity was apparent in Fleming’s choice of themes for her classes and recitals. Amy Hollingsworth described her grandmother’s imaginative choreography and costume designs that were displayed perfectly in the performances of Greek myths and Australian Bush Ballets held in the outdoor settings of the Sunken Gardens at the University of Western Australia (UWA; as cited in Pope, 2014). Fleming is described as an inspiring teacher and leader (Vincent, personal communication, January 19, 2016). Vivienne Jackson thought of her as a generous and a very gracious person (as cited in Pope, 2014). Fleming was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in 1987 for her services to the arts (Pope, 2014).

Fleming was my first dance teacher; her classes were held in St Margaret’s church hall in Nedlands. She was well known for her broadcasts on ABC radio: *Kindergarten of the Air* (1942) and *Folk Dance for Schools* (1943). This exposure enhanced her reputation as a dance teacher. She was a very pretty woman, warm and very kind, reaching out to shy little girls with considerable success. Her skill as a teacher was demonstrated in the structure of her classes. Floor exercises came first; then we stood up to form circles and shapes like diagonals...
and squares. The movements consisted of walking, running, skipping, and throwing balls. In those formative years, I learned the sheer joy of movement (Figure 14). This method of teaching relates to what is now termed the ‘feeling before the form’. In retrospect, I understand that the classes were unobtrusively structured; they appeared to just happen as one idea led to the next. Improvisation to music and creativity were encouraged, with an opportunity to learn dance while enacting and absorbing Greek and Roman mythology, where the taller girls took the male roles.

![Figure 14: Diana de Vos, c, 1948. Collection of Diana de Vos.](image)

**Males in dance**

The absence of any detail from the participants about young boys in the classes during the 1950s and 60s suggests that they were not encouraged to learn dancing during this period. The lack of male dancers of any age in these studios is confirmed by Stevens (interview, January 4, 2016), Meade (interview, November 17, 2015), and my own experience. From Cruickshank’s account, it appears that adult males were taught in Wilson’s studio, but no young boys: Wilson was “good like that, she had a whole group of boys who would attend the girl’s classes but she would give them different exercises focusing on the big jumps (interview, November 11, 2015). Male characters were often portrayed by females who had to be taller than the female character and were able to jump, which was seen as a masculine attribute (Vincent, personal communication, January 19, 2016). For example, when Stacy
choreographed a ballet called *Anemone*, the absence of a partner was noticed. The male role of the North Wind was danced by Leslie Hanson, *en travestie*, which means dressed as a member of the opposite sex, to my character, *Anemone*. Her strong technique and her ability to jump ensured that she danced the role admirably.

**Second generation**

The image of a tree continues to represent the second generation of Perth dance teachers, of which I am a part, taking the narrative from the roots to the trunk of a sapling tree. Over time, the images of stability, growth, and grace reflect the maturity of the tree in its representation of teachers and the development of dance training. The following interviews highlight the expertise and efforts of this second generation, which produce the branches and blossoms of the tree.

Biographical information on each participant is given below, including their early dance history, performing experience, choice of teaching methods, and how this influenced their work and practice as dance teachers. The issue of young male students in ballet is also discussed. Research shows how this generation slowly revolutionised the principles and practices of ballet teaching in Perth.

**Gay Cruickshank (1935–)**

*Teacher at the Linley Wilson School of Dancing  
Patron of the RAD Advisory Panel of WA.*

Gay Cruickshank (Figure 15) was born in Nedlands, a western suburb of Perth. Her mother was born into a Jewish family in Australia and married an Englishman who had come to Australia in 1922 “just for a trip” (interview, November 11, 2015). Cruickshank mentions that she had very little inclination to her ‘Jewishness’:

> I always felt that England was home because Dad spoke of it all the time and my wish was to get back to England…. I have a very strong connection to England and it is something that is just there—it is in your bones. As a young child, I loved music. (interview, November 11, 2015)

Cruickshank taught ballet for Linley Wilson for some time after her return from England and later married John Cruickshank.
June Stevens (1944–) Reg. Teacher of RAD

June Stevens’ (Figure 16) contribution to the dance profession in Perth as the Principal of the Stevens Academy of Classical Ballet was substantial. She grew up in the western suburb of Dalkeith, but did not meet Cruickshank until the 1980s. Her mother was third-generation Australian from Sydney; her English father had come to Australia in 1912 at the age of six. From a family of five and the third daughter, she says her father, who was “Victorian,” strict, and always working, strongly influenced her personality. Her mother would admonish the three younger children, born after the war:

“Ssh! Stop talking your father is coming” (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016). She recalls “a box of groceries was left on the back step for us,” illustrating their financial hardship:

Dad was self-employed; on his return from the war he opened up his own electrical manufacturing business. Financially things were tight. Dad used to come home on Friday night with either no money or two shillings…. You know that there were always shoes without soles, actually I feel like crying and we had old coats on our bed when it was cold in winter. (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016)

Her relationship with her father was difficult, “all on his terms, very patriarchal but without any connection to him” (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016). At 15, her schooling finished, he threw a newspaper down on the bed, saying, “something you need to look at,” so she immediately began job hunting in spite of the school headmaster’s advice that “this girl because of her scholastic ability, should go on with her education” (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016).
Gail Meade (1947—) Reg. Teacher of RAD and CSTD

Gail Meade, Principal of the Gail Meade Performing Arts Centre, has an English background with a difference (Figure 17). She and her family were born in Karapul, India; her grandparents are of English and Irish extraction. The family left India in 1948 prior to India gaining independence from the British: “My Dad belonged to a very talented family, all singers, and my mother, though she had no formal training, felt she was the dancer” (Meade, interview, November 17, 2015).

Diana de Vos (1943—) OAM, BA, FRAD

Senior teacher with Graduate College of Dance (1977–1995), Co-Principal at Terpsichore Dance Centre (1996–2001) and Lecturer at WAAPA (2003–). Former RAD Vocational Examiner (1992–2014) and recipient of the Academy’s President’s Award in 2012.

My ancestors, who were from Belgium, Holland, Germany, Sweden, and Ireland, joined the Dutch East India Company and left Europe to settle in Ceylon. They held influential positions in that Dutch colony, but after the British takeover of Ceylon in the nineteenth century, the Dutch adopted British nationality. I was born in Colombo, Ceylon. In 1947, when I was three, my family moved to Australia on British passports before Ceylon gained independence from Britain and became Sri Lanka. Our connection with England was reflected in our very formal manners, English accents, and allegiance to the British monarchy. I spent my formative years in Perth in the western suburb of Dalkeith (Figure 18).
Early dance history and relationship with first-generation teachers

Cruickshank at age 10 began learning dancing with Joan Stacy on the veranda of Mrs Toop’s Cottesloe home. Cruickshank expands on the condition of the facilities they used: “The boards were so rough that to do a tendu was difficult; the leg had to be lifted over the rough surface and the foot pointed at the end” (interview, November 11, 2015). Her early training was conducted at various church halls in the Claremont–Nedlands area which was Stacy’s ‘patch’. Cruickshank reveals that at her first RAD Major examination she discovered the high standard of Wilson’s school. In the foyer of Wilson’s studio, where the examinations were conducted, she saw two of Wilson’s students, both with long legs, impeccably groomed, hair done in the customary fashion with a bun at the nape of the neck and wearing beautifully made tutus. Her immediate response was to “turn to my mother and say that’s the way I want to look and that is where I want to learn” (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015).

Cruickshank’s mother made inquiries, but Wilson would not accept her as a student until Stacy had been informed: “I think actually she, Joan, was terribly upset. At that time students generally went from Linley to Joan” (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015).

Cruickshank explains that this happened because most of the students had “tough experiences” with Wilson, as she was particular about the standard of balletic execution.

Conversely, Stevens began dancing accidentally because her sister was working at the Australian Broadcasting Commission with Philippa, Stacy’s daughter: “My mother teaches ballet, why don’t you take her there?” (interview, January 4, 2016). They cycled up to Locke Street Hall: “I think it was the structure and the music. I can see myself now, a little butterball flapping around, sandals on…. nobody told me to take my sandals off” (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016). Stevens recalls there wasn’t much in the way of mid-week classes, but what attracted her was how it was “all so logical and in ballet it is the very strong structure, it was lovely” (interview, January 4, 2016). Her story paints a picture of life in Perth. Stevens did not work with any other teacher in Perth: “it was very insular, there was no vehicle for me to even come across anybody else who learned elsewhere or had a different teacher” (interview, January 4, 2016).

As a teenager, she had problems with her feet:

they wouldn’t work in pointe shoes and I was breaking my heart. Mrs Haesler [Stacy] suggested that I would be good at character dance. Well I wanted to be a ballet dancer! In retrospect, I wish I had but there was nowhere to go. (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016)
In hindsight, she believes that if she had gone to Linley Wilson she “would have moved away from ballet” (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016).

At two, Meade was taken by her mother to the Shirley Halliday School of Dancing in the northern suburbs of Perth. She really loved dancing. Halliday told her that if she wished to dance she would have to learn the classical style, which she did not like at first, but “ended up being my first love” (interview, November 17, 2015). She began by learning jazz, tap, and ballet. The CSTD system was infiltrating WA, and Meade notes she “was rather a pioneer for them as I was the first to gain the Martin Rubenstein Award and the Blue Sash, which were the highest accolades from that system” (interview, November 17, 2015). Halliday sent Meade to Stacy for her RAD Major examinations (interview, November 17, 2015).

My mother was my role model in the world of dance. She loved to dance and wanted me to have that pleasure. I do not remember anything actually inspiring me but I simply loved moving to the music. In my imagination, I tried to express aspects of nature through movement. My early training in Australia began at five with Fleming, then at about seven with Morwenna Vincent and Penelope Hanrahan, who had been students of Wilson. Their approach was to encourage a love of dance and I loved it. Vincent and Hanrahan were dancers with the WAB, I had seen them performing. They were young and pretty and they made it fun. Marina Berezowsky taught for Fleming and my time spent with her will be discussed in Chapter four.

Fleming kept us involved and interested in dance by organising a variety of performances presented at the Sunken Gardens at UWA. I was a wattle fairy and a donkey orchid in Bush Ballet. Still later I was Pandora’s friend in a balletic version of the Greek legend, Pandora’s Box. Sadko was the last in which I performed and the least memorable, but I do recall Joan Pope, Morwenna and Judith Vincent and Penelope Hanrahan taking the leading roles.

My next teacher was Stacy with whom I studied the major/vocational syllabus of the RAD. At the age of 13, I studied for my Elementary examination and received a Pass+. Very disappointing because I imagined that I had done well. I did not realise that one had to put in a lot of time and effort to achieve better results. At 15, on three classes a week, I passed my Intermediate examination, still not a brilliant result. Again, I had not understood that I had a difficult body, very supple and with hyperextended legs; time was needed to manage this disobedient body. I could not do what my best friend could do. She was older and had a stronger physique.
At this time Perth was a city with a small population of 600,000 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1954); however, it is surprising that only two of this second generation knew each other. Stevens and I went to the same primary school but went our separate ways until we met again at Stacy’s school; Cruickshank, Stevens, and I lived in the west, while Meade lived in the northern suburbs. The age gap of 10 years between the youngest and the oldest participant may also have contributed. Despite similar path, we did not meet until three of us, Stevens, Meade, and I, were established teachers and Cruickshank came back to the dance scene as Local Organiser for RAD and Chair of the RAD Advisory Panel of WA.

**Performing experience**

Cruickshank’s performance experience included dancing Prelude from the ballet *Les Sylphides*, and corps de ballet roles in *Coppélia* and *Faust*. These were student recitals, held every year in the programme of all dance schools. Cruickshank acknowledges the influence of Janina Cunovas (see Chapter four), whose experience and skills enabled students to learn ballets of the Romantic Era (interview, November 11, 2015). This connection or cross fertilisation with European teachers had an impact on dance in Perth (see Chapter five).

Stevens, at 16, went to the newly established WAB, where she met others with a similar interest in dance. Her performance experience included stage and TV shows with WAB and the Iana Ballet Company. Stevens recalls that the latter put on a season at the Pier Street Hall: “I can remember dancing one night to about two people in the whole place. It was artistically okay I think, well at least we had a go at it” (interview, January 4, 2016).

Meade, at the age of 10, performed with the Borovansky Ballet Company in Perth. She also performed with the RAD Group and a regional group formed by Robert Pomié. Opportunities came when she worked with Colleen Clifford of Theatre Guild in *Oklahoma* and *Annie get Your Gun* (interview, November 17, 2015). On Channel Seven she performed as a singer and dancer when there were live shows broadcast in Perth. Once, when preparing for a competition, Meade had the opportunity to work with Kira Bousloff, but on arriving at the studio, three of Bousloff’s students greeted her with “Oh you, we weren’t expecting you” (interview, November 17, 2015). As a result, Meade has always felt looked down upon as a theatrical dancer: “there was always a bit of a stigma” (interview, November 17, 2015).
In 1952, my family moved from a rented house to a house in another area of Dalkeith. The best part of the house was the veranda upon which the ‘budding ballerinas’ in the neighbourhood performed. Another concrete space was added later, extending out into the garden and used for concerts. We choreographed ‘works’ and invited our neighbours to watch for the cost of a silver coin. A little hoard of coins was donated to a charity of our choice. One of our works was named *The Seasons* and I was ‘Spring’. *Rustle of Spring* was the music chosen from my mother’s vinyl 78-inch records.

My experience as a dancer/performer was quite extensive for that time. I worked with the WAB from the age of 15 to 23. At that time, many dancers worked with the French dancer Robert Pomié who came to Perth as a guest artist to dance in the romantic ballet *Giselle* (Figure 19). The opportunities to take part in classics like *Giselle*, *Swan Lake Act Two*, and *La Boutique Fantasque* in the theatre were educational and enabled me to work at all levels of company hierarchy, from corps de ballet to principal roles. *Nutcracker*, *Le Baiser de la Fée*, and *Poeme Symphonique* were all performed on television, as were Bousloff’s productions of *Beach Inspector and the Mermaid*, *Woodara*, and *Kooree and the Mist*. On tour, I danced Prelude and the Pas de Deux from *Les Sylphides* and *The Dying Swan*; Pavlova’s signature solo was taught to me by Bousloff. All these opportunities have helped me to coach my own students. (My television and stage performances in Melbourne and Sydney will not be discussed here, as the study is limited to experience in WA.)

Meade (interview, November 17, 2015) and Stevens (interview, January 4, 2016) regard the opportunities they had to perform in yearly concerts as being beneficial later on in their teaching practice; they agree with me that performance experience is an important tool in a teacher’s arsenal. Skills such as the ability to articulate how movements are interpreted and to demonstrate expressively are of value. The provision of performance opportunities through
the efforts of the first generation gave rise to such skills, equipping teachers of the second generation in their future careers.

**Choice of teaching method**

The second-generation English lineage continued to teach the systems they studied as students in Perth, but all benefitted from national and/or international training. Cruickshank had two visits to England, accompanying her parents in 1952; then in 1955 continued her balletic studies at the Arts Educational School known previously as Cone-Ripman School. After passing her ballroom dancing examinations and becoming a member of the ISTD, she returned to Perth in 1956. She was employed by Wilson to teach the RAD syllabus, and Wrightson’s Dance Studio employed her to teach ballroom dancing. Cruickshank leaves the story in 1960. She did not continue with her teaching but in 1986 she took on the positions of Local Organiser of RAD. At that time, she became Chair of the RAD Advisory Panel and in 2003, she was invited to become the Panel’s Patron (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015).

After leaving school in 1959, Stevens worked as secretary of the Human Resources Manager at Shell Oil Company and in 1972 as secretary to the Director General of Transport, while she taught ballet as a sideline. She began teaching only on Saturdays; when the school had grown significantly Stevens decided to teach dance full time “because I come from an entrepreneurial background and because I am concerned that if I am going to do it I am going to do it my way” (interview, January 4, 2016). Stevens taught RAD syllabus work “because Mrs Haesler taught it and I had this ‘we are the best’ sense about it” (interview, January 4, 2016). She did not at that stage investigate any other system.

Meade trained and worked within the CSTD system because “that is where I was trained and I feel it does produce a good all-rounder” (interview, November 17, 2015).

My decision to teach came about after an injury. At 16, I was working in Stacy’s studio in Hay Street when the sole of my ballet shoe caught in a gap between the boards, and a small bone in my foot snapped. The healing process took a long time but I did persevere for some eight years. I realised I was unable to proceed any further with ballet as a performance career, so under pressure from my family I gave up dancing and became a flight attendant. The pull to perform was too strong; even while I was employed in the airlines I managed to take part in amateur performances. It is often the case that once bitten by the bug of dance it is impossible to be attracted to any other activity.
The teachers I knew taught RAD, so I chose to follow their example and taught the grades syllabus produced by Dame Margot Fonteyn when she was President of the Academy. The system was well known and popular. I learned the syllabus by attending seminars held by visiting examiners and continued teaching the work. On my return to Perth in 1977, I taught for Terri Charlesworth, who was at that time teaching the RAD system.

Different reasons and situations affected us all, but through it we became involved because of our genuine interest in dance and in ballet in particular.

**Early teaching conditions**

In this section, participants recall the impact their teachers had on them, incidents encountered in rented facilities in the early stages of their careers, and how improved information from overseas enabled them to build better facilities.

Stevens developed a similar approach to students as Stacy had maintained and which she had experienced (interview, January 4, 2016). In the early years of her teaching career, she endeavoured to engender the love of dance in her students right from the beginning of their association. Sarah Hepburn, now soloist with WAB, refers to Stevens’ generosity thus: “if we were waiting for Mum, June would let you do any of the classes” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). Hepburn remembers pictures of former students hanging on the walls “so as a very young kid I looked at them and was inspired” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). Stevens states that becoming a teacher was not a conscious thought:

> it was just what I did, there was no money in it but it speaks to the heart. There is nothing like walking into the studio and turning on the CD and the sound of music in this big space and all you want to do is dance. (interview, January 4, 2016)

![Figure 20](image-url)  
*Figure 20: Vocational students at Stevens Academy of Classical Ballet. Courtesy of June Stevens.*
Stevens’ first studio was a small space next to a fish and chip shop. She recalls with some mirth an incident that occurred when she was teaching: she heard a “wild scream” and rushed into the next studio, where she found Monica in the midst of a large pool of water with a heater at her feet. A water pipe had burst! “I rushed in and pulled out the plug of the heater. I had to teach so I left the others to get on with clearing up the mess” (personal communication, August 9, 2016). These were the conditions that she and Monica Wardman, her associate, worked under. The school continued to grow, which prompted Stevens to move to bigger premises and begin teaching more advanced students (Figure 20). She and her partner enlarged the existing premises by building another studio at the back and adding a small garden. Renovations were done upstairs to create a smaller studio, wardrobe space and offices. Financial circumstances made it necessary to build these extensions on their own.

In the early years, Stevens employed a pianist Coral Jeffrey and used her for the ‘littlies’. A story of an empathic pianist suggests that having a pianist can have moments of hilarity:

she watched the children who couldn’t keep in time and as they got slower, Coral got slower until everything, music and dance, ground to a halt. On a CD, you can have any sort of music, piano, or orchestration but it hasn’t got the human fallibility that a pianist has, and there is something about the interaction that a teacher and pianist can have that sets a beautiful atmosphere in a classroom. (interview, January 4, 2016)

Gradually, cassettes and CDs were made available by the teaching organisations and were a better economical proposition for the studio. Stevens demonstrates the importance of musicality through her body language:

to me the music is feeling, and it is where the music takes you. I think some people have it and some people don’t. Musicality is not just being in time, real musicality is going beyond that knowing where to linger, where to move, just stretch it and still be there when you have to be. (interview, January 4, 2016)

She encouraged her students to continue with the RAD Vocational levels of training. Hepburn remembers that Stevens had a good knowledge of anatomy: “she called everything by its proper name. She knew what she was doing so we were always learning about our bodies, always learning” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). Li Yi Law, a former student and now a corps de ballet member of WAB, recalls how much she achieved through the encouragement of the teachers at the Stevens Academy and Académie Étoile (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). Stevens describes her value as a teacher was to work with the “little ones … my teaching younger children was quite special because I had a rapport with them” (interview, January 4, 2016). She identifies herself as a role model for them and believes there can be a very intimate relationship between a dance teacher and a student (interview,
January 4, 2016). In 1997, Stevens’ expertise enabled her to establish a full-time school in association with Leslie Hutchinson and myself. This association worked well for five years. Stevens’ students have had successful careers in dance and in the support practices of physiotherapy and counselling. Now retired, Stevens believes a teacher is charged with a great responsibility:

I miss teaching, mentoring being the real meaning of teacher. They would give back to you in spadesful… After two fallow years, I thought what can I do? I love colour, I love movement I’ll paint. It has taken a place, but it will never take the place of dance in my heart. (interview, January 4, 2016)

As Principal of the Gail Meade Performing Arts Centre, Meade has over the years improved the standard of classical ballet in her school. The purpose-built building has four studios with Tarket floors and barres on the walls. She introduced ‘Ballerina’ classes to concentrate on stretching, and a ‘Turning Point’ class to assist students wishing to take ballet more seriously. Meade regards the worst thing about theatrical dancers is “to do with the arms” (interview, November 17, 2015). The inference that a theatrically trained dancer was an inferior dancer has been perpetuated all these years.

Meade has four qualified teachers on her staff all with a particular skill: ballet, jazz, or tap. As far as the ballet component is concerned, her school teaches both CSTD and RAD systems; she is qualified to teach both (interview, November 17, 2015). A number of her students have been very successful, moving to secondary and tertiary levels of training. Roberts, a former student, enjoyed working with Meade and training in both systems. She says CSTD was taken at a fast pace, whereas RAD was slower and more detailed. Theatre was not important to Roberts, as she wished to take ballet more seriously (focus group 2, April 20, 2016).

Meade’s school in 2016 celebrates 45 years of continuous operations. Meade loves to teach the little ones who are struggling, so she takes them out of class for a very special event—to do a class with Miss Meade: “I just love to see how they can improve when given private tuition; after all, that is what they are here for” (interview, November 17, 2015). Meade, who is considering retirement, feels her staff are competent: “My girls are very good, in fact, they do come to me and I find that very flattering” (interview, November 17, 2015). She is adopting more of an advisory role in her school. The improvement in ballet training in her school is clearly described. She has passed on her knowledge to her daughters and students who will continue in this profession for the foreseeable future.
After a varied training combining Greek dancing and classical ballet, my teaching career began at the age of 15. The influences of my teachers from the European and English lineages have been maintained in my teaching practice. Kira Bousloff asked me to teach some five-year-old students for her in a studio in the Grand Theatre Building. A boy named Paul de Masson was in my class; he later danced with The Australian Ballet. With the support of Bousloff and Charlesworth, I opened my own small schools in Nollamara and Dalkeith. The opening of the Dalkeith branch caused friction with my former teacher, Stacy. As I was still teaching young children and delivering the RAD Grades syllabus, I added to my classes basic movements I had learned from Fleming (free movement), Berezowsky (classical and character), and Cunovas (style and presentation). Charlesworth’s introduction to the work of Audrey de Vos was, for me, a breakthrough. This knowledge was of great assistance in correcting and improving physical difficulties. My teaching experiences in Sydney were also of value when I began teaching the vocational levels at the Graduate College of Dance. I achieved my Advanced Teachers Certificate from the RAD in 1979. My experience was reminiscent of Stacy’s in London when taking her RAD teachers’ examination. Charlesworth, in the late 1970s, made the decision to change her method to the Besobrasova System, as her interest lay in teaching students for the profession. As a member of her staff, I was absolutely ‘in the thick of it all’. This was a time of learning, not only absorbing vocabulary but observing experienced teachers ‘work the classroom’, imparting knowledge to students.

Stevens, Meade, and I have all been through a training ground of teaching young students in sub-standard conditions, building up student numbers until we could continue working with more advanced students. Stevens prefers teaching young children and has remained with the RAD (interview, January 4, 2016); Meade began with CSTD and later studied the RAD, and trains students using both methods; she enjoys teaching young children and watching them develop (interview, November 17, 2015). I worked in different secondary schools, established my own school and finally found my niche teaching the advanced levels of both the Vaganova and RAD systems at a tertiary level institution.

**Male students in ballet**

This second generation saw greater inclusion of boys in ballet classes. Both Stevens and Meade had success with boys they taught to dance. They firmly believe that there are never enough boys studying ballet. Meade says there were a sprinkling of boys, generally in the areas of jazz and tap (interview, November 17, 2015). One young man made an impression at
an audition for a Wiggles show. The question was asked whether he had learned ballet. When the answer was in the negative, back came the response “ooh, that is a shame it is so important” (interview, November 17, 2015). The young man in question began learning ballet. Stevens agrees and notes that teaching boys is different from the much more equal relationship in teaching girls:

Yes, boys are quite nice to respond to in class. There is a little spark that isn’t happening with the girls…. Boys can be vulnerable, although none of the boys I have taught, and I have taught about 10 or 12, have been anything other than delightful to me. (interview, January 4, 2016)

When an occasional boy did come to class, he was encouraged to maintain his interest. The Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet contributes to this discussion when he recalls his determination to dance. “I was asked by the nuns at school what I wanted to do when I grew up? I said I wanted to dance” (McAllister, personal communication, December 11, 2016). His admission was frowned upon by the nuns, but when his father was informed about the incident and his son’s wish, he thumped the table with his fist and said, “David can do what he wants” (McAllister, personal communication, December 11, 2016). Numbers did improve gradually, but boys were certainly outnumbered by girls (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016). Young boys were encouraged to take up sporting activities rather than go to dance classes. Older males did participate in some ballet school performances in the early days (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). Without the participation of young men in classes, partnering or pas de deux, an essential skill for the profession, could not be taught.

**Summary**

The first generation’s English heritage and close connection with English ballet societies coincided with their choice of classical ballet or theatrical dance. The significant contributions made by the English lineage have been demonstrated in several ways: the promotion of ballet from an educational aspect, the love of the art form, and establishing ballet as a cultural and recreational activity in Perth. The second generation showed an obvious affection and respect for their teachers, especially Stacy, whose personal example of kindness, warmth, and enthusiasm for her students and the art of ballet is well remembered. Wilson’s privileged position enabled her to build a respected school with high-quality facilities that reflected her demand for excellence; as a result, many professional dancers were taught by her. Wilson significantly influenced the Department of Education policies that advocated dance as a healthy activity for school children. Her efforts to champion the RAD
in Perth have been acknowledged, as she was awarded the RAD President’s Award and made a Fellow of the RAD. The other protagonists also had successful schools, albeit developing a different ethos from that of Wilson. They were also able to foster talented students who later went on to be performers and teachers of both the classical and theatrical styles.

The developments that occurred between generations began with improved opportunities for participants to train overseas or in the eastern states, resulting in improved knowledge from international sources. All the participants had some performance experience either locally or nationally, and in doing so developed an important facet of their teaching skills that encouraged artistry—a necessary attribute for the profession.

Contacts and communications with overseas centres made it possible to offer better facilities, as studios complied with current safety standards, resulting in a more consistent level of ballet technique in most schools. For first-generation teachers, there were situations in the early 1950s when students were trained in makeshift conditions, dancing on hard wooden floors in council or church halls. As demand for classes grew, larger studios with ample space and barres attached to walls provided stability and safety. In spite of the slow growth of ballet schools as commercial ventures, both generations regarded their schools as businesses. The second generation worked in rented premises until student numbers made it possible to buy or build their own studios with improved conditions and services.

Anatomical information was rarely considered necessary to endorse movements of classical ballet during the early years; in fact, the science of the human body was infrequently if ever used to support balletic movements. For the second generation, ballet rather than fancy dancing was being taught; teachers displayed a greater understanding of how the discipline was maintained. Necessary priorities were correct technique, encouragement of artistic qualities, and an understanding of French terminology.

The first generation used pianists to accompany classes, but musical theory was hardly discussed in terms of a response to atmosphere or dynamics, characteristics of both music and dance. Some interviews suggested that musical education in those early, formative years varied from school to school depending on the teacher’s emphasis on musicality, but for all participants it was an enjoyable aspect of learning ballet. By the time the second-generation schools were established, recorded music was used and pianists employed only occasionally.
The participants in this chapter spoke of their experiences of teaching young boys and stated that perceptions of dance being unsuitable for boys were very slowly changing in the community, another important development.

Mothers played a pivotal role in the decision to take up ballet for Cruickshank, Meade, and myself, while in Stevens’ case both mother and sister provided encouragement and guidance. Our mothers chose reputable teachers who were known to inspire young girls to enjoy the dance as both a recreational and educational activity.

The efforts of the first generation clearly inspired the second generation to continue in this profession. Over time, commitment, perseverance, and initiative lifted the standard of teaching and created further opportunities for students. The outstanding similarity shared by teachers of both generations of the English lineage is their love for dance and, in particular, classical ballet.

Chapter four will discuss the contribution of the first-generation teachers of the European lineage in Perth. The second generation consists of Australians who were taught and influenced by them. Both generations have significantly influenced the profession in Perth.
Chapter four: European lineage

This chapter will examine the influence and legacy of the European lineage of classical ballet teachers in Perth. The metaphor of the tree continues to illustrate the connections in this pedagogical lineage, with the roots representing a combination of the European and English lineages. The second metaphor, water, highlights the first wave of performers/teachers from Europe, who influenced the participants who inform this research.

Anna Pavlova’s visit to Perth in 1929 encouraged an interest in ballet. The second visitor was Edouard Borovansky from the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, who remained in Australia because of the impending war and founded a company with headquarters in Melbourne; in 1944, the Borovansky Ballet Company became professional and visited Perth occasionally (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010, p. 3).

Perth in the early 1950s experienced an influx of European migrants (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010), who came as displaced persons seeking a new home in an isolated part of the world (Messenger, 2011). They offered a different picture of life and culture to the local ballet community (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010, p. 168).

First generation

Five dance teachers—Nadine Wulffius, Marina Berezowsky, Janina Cunovas, Kira Bousloff, and Gunhild Sobkowiak-Ferris—are the focus of this section. Information regarding their early lives has been gathered predominantly from archival material. The obituaries of two of the four ‘Russians’ were published in The West Australian newspaper, and those of the other two in other Australian publications (Messenger, 2011). Information from two books, Australia Dances (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010) and Kira’s Legacy: The first twenty-one years of WA Ballet Company 1953–1973 (Wood, 2014), relates mostly to their involvement in the formation of a performance group. Sobkowiak-Ferris, the youngest of the five, is still alive and offered her knowledge of this period of history. The interview participants related their experiences with these protagonists, referring mostly to their work as teachers.

Intervention of war in their homelands was the likely catalyst that brought these five women and their families to WA to begin a new stage of their lives. Bousloff was a White Russian (Wood, 2014) born in Monte Carlo. Her family became aware of the political developments in Russia and migrated to France. Wulffius, (Chudziak, 1986), Berezowsky and Cunovas came from the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Sobkowiak-Ferris is Austrian
They migrated to Perth between 1949 and 1952. Their ethnicities provided a backdrop for their performance skills, which they had in abundance. An important aspect of this research is to explore their style, the qualities they added to the skills of the English lineage teachers and their impact on ballet training in Perth.

Nadine Wulffius (1899–1992)

Nadine Wulffius, or Madame Nadine as she was known, was the matriarch of the group. Asotoff describes her as follows:

> delightful, she was a true lady. She was the only person whose opinion Kira Bousloff feared…. I remember she would come to the student concerts and be given seats close to the stage. Her vision was deteriorating but after the performance she would say “Kiritchka darling, how could you let these girls have such dirty shoes?” So much for her poor eyesight. (interview, December 18, 2015)

Wulffius was born in Latvia. Her father was a botanist and historian at Moscow University and her mother was an aristocrat. After an idyllic childhood, she withstood some stiff opposition from her maternal grandmother, who insisted that a career in ballet was not acceptable as dancers in the early twentieth century had bad reputations (Chudziak, 1986). The situation was resolved when it was known that her paternal grandfather came from the peasantry, a lower social class, and Wulffius was permitted to enrol at the Imperial Ballet School in St Petersburg (Chudziak, 1986). Her teachers included Olga Preobrajenska and the curriculum included repertoire, character dance, and theoretical subjects such as music and the history of dance. In an interview with Chudziak (1986), Wulffius reveals her respect for her teacher, Khudekov: “The influence and memory of him goes through all my life and I am indebted to him for my understanding and love I have for the ballet,” expressing gratitude for her teacher as part of the tradition in ballet circles. Asotoff discusses Wulffius’ personality and classes, which dealt with the training of the arms or port de bras, as follows:

> she proved to be formidable as well as charismatic. She developed the spirit of a corps de ballet, teaching relaxation and breath control, body stance, lifting the diaphragm and eye exercises. She was a specialist of head movements and refined arm movements. Dancers felt the most valuable contribution she imparted in her classes was the spiritual element…she was wonderful and extraordinary, generous with her knowledge of theory … but Madame Nadine expected to be heeded. (interview, December 18, 2015; Wood, 2014, p. 25)

Asotoff also confirms that Wulffius was a “real scholar,” having studied at the University of St Petersburg (interview, December 18, 2015).
Madame Nadine’s ladylike behaviour, neatness, and manners are important aspects of her personality, which I remember well. My association with her was brief during the period I was in the WAB, but as a teacher some 15 years later I went to her to learn about dance and its history. She taught me about the evolution of dance from the beginning—from primitive peoples. How dance evolved through the centuries from the dance of the people to an activity for those with acquired skills—and of course, the way to teach port de bras or the refined carriage of the arms. She stressed the lift and rotation of the upper arm and the way in which the fingers were held. Her exercises were simple but effective, and I still use them for my students to improve flexibility and quality of movement in the arms. The way in which the arms are used: the practical use which then results in an aesthetically pleasing style was how Wulffius described these skills. If I wish to concentrate on the correct use of port de bras in my class, I use the exercises as an introduction and a way to focus the students’ attention on the carriage of the arms. Wulffius confirmed what I had been taught years earlier by Berezowsky.

Madame was a charming woman; after teaching a group of teachers she would entertain us, serving Russian tea with lemon and some cakes, which were also of Russian origin. I particularly remember the special food—Paskha eaten at Easter. She told us the moulded form symbolised the Russian Orthodox Church and would often express her belief of the importance of symbolism and spirituality in dance.

Wulffius’ cultivated manners and comprehensive understanding of dance technique and artistry exemplify the rich contributions of the European lineage of teachers to ballet in Perth.

Marina Berezowsky AM (1914–2011)

Another prominent member of this group was Marina Berezowsky (Figure 21), who arrived in Perth in 1949 with her husband and her daughter, Valentina. Berezowsky was brought up in St Petersburg, the daughter of a well-known graphic artist. She learned painting, drawing, and classical ballet at an early age. Berezowsky also had a considerable career in the theatre, having danced with the State Operetta Theatre in Kiev (1935–36) and with the Gorky Opera Ballet in Russia (1937–38) (Messenger, 2011).
On her arrival in Perth, she joined the staff of Dorothy Fleming’s school, where she taught “proper Russian folk dance” (Pope, 2014). Jo Davies recalls that “she was very different from Miss Fleming; her mood could change quickly. She would flare up and bark at us and sometimes gave the less facile dancers a hard time. Her classes were fun” (as cited in Pope, 2014). Vincent states that “classical ballet was anathema to her” (personal communication, January 19, 2016). She was a strict teacher and in line with her background divided the dancers into categories, either classical or character (Wood, 2014). Berezowsky was a spirited dancer, she choreographed for the WAB and they performed her work when she danced the role of the gypsy girl in the ballet Romane, which demonstrated her love of character dance (Brisssenden & Glennon, 2010).

Charlesworth’s opinion is that Berezowsky never took any classical classes in Perth, and just took character classes for the company:

> Her character dance came mostly from the folk style, which later was the development of the Moiseyev company style rather than the classical character as I began to know it later on, but it was so vibrant it was wonderful. (interview, November 16, 2015)

Later, she taught classical ballet at Myola Hall, Claremont, to a younger generation of students (Wise, personal communication, May 8, 2016). It is clear that Berezowsky had two strings to her bow, both classical and character, and that combination was used to develop artistry and vigour in the interpretation of the classical ballet vocabulary.

Madame Berezowsky was my second teacher. She impressed upon me that learning ballet was a serious affair. That realisation came to me on one occasion when she demanded that I repeat a particular adage movement again and again. I do not know whether or not she used a particular system, but possibly it was the influence of the Russian Imperial method, which would have been used in her time as a student. She must have known about anatomy because she helped me manage the hyperextension of my legs. I remember her kneeling beside me and straightening the leg so it did not look like a ‘banana leg’ and she corrected my weight in order for it to be over the front of my foot—not on the heels. This shape of my legs was another reason my mother had me taught ballet. Berezowsky also understood how to achieve well-shaped port de bras. We were taught exercises to make the muscles in the arms more flexible and the importance of shaping the arms correctly with the upper arm rotated to achieve pleasing lines. Berezowsky was very particular; she was detailed but instilled in her
students that arm movements should flow—not be stilted or rigid. She always related the arm movements to the music. She really understood how music and movement were interwoven.

Berezowsky was an artist with a volatile temperament. She could paint, choreograph, and dance. There was some disagreement among the participants over her teaching skills, but it has been established that she taught both character dance and classical ballet. It was unfortunate that she was only in Perth for a short time, as she left for Melbourne in 1956.

Janina Cunovas (1914–2007)

Cunovas (Figure 22) also came to Perth in 1949. She was born in Kaunas, Lithuania, and trained at the Kaunas National Ballet School for nine years and then joined the Lithuanian Ballet Company (Helene, 2007). By 1944, the political situation had worsened, so after having worked with several luminaries in London and Monte Carlo she, her husband, and her sister joined the Vienna State Opera Ballet (Ward Warren, 1996). At the end of the war, they joined the entertainment unit of the US Occupation forces in Europe. Later, they were forming members of the Lithuanian Dance Company, which performed throughout West Germany (Helene, 2007). On arriving in Perth, she joined the staff of Linley Wilson’s School, which Cruickshank recalls as follows:

I tried to interview Janina about her memoirs. She really got terribly angry. She did not wish to revisit those times during the war and she hated Linley because Linley took advantage of her. But being there at that time when Janina, Regina [Ratas], and Marina [Berezowsky] came into class. The technique of those dancers was not up to RAD standards. The positions of the feet were not clearly defined and Linley gave them private lessons. (interview, November 11, 2015)

Wilson could see the potential benefit of Cunovas, with her knowledge of the Romantic ballets that are still performed, and her student, Patricia Dyer, was taught the role of Swanilda from Coppélia (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). Cunovas’ experience and knowledge as a performer in her own country and at the Vienna State Opera Ballet were valuable for the profession in Perth, but she was taught the RAD syllabi by Wilson, who also assisted her with her placement: “I don’t think that Janina would have become the teacher that she did become. Wilson took hours and hours with Janina. Janina was beautiful” (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). Cruickshank confirms that
Cunovas was Lithuanian, but admits that in her mind she regarded herself as Russian (interview, November 11, 2015). This was, in fact, a selling point for her future attraction in Australia and America, where she later went and taught with Jurgen Schneider (Ward Warren, 1996). Charlesworth notes that Cunovas had all the material from the Russian Imperial system, but at that time she did not take any classes with WAB as she was mostly employed to choreograph: It was “tragic for her because she had this wealth of knowledge you use for the building up, the building up, the building up” (interview, November 16, 2015). In 1958, she and her family moved to Melbourne where she became a member of the RAD. Cunovas, like Berezowsky, had two strings to her bow: she taught both the Russian Imperial and the RAD systems. Charlesworth recalls that Cunovas “did not really give us any classical classes; she did mostly choreography but I do remember her doing some classes on pointe and she taught me fouettés” (interview, November 16, 2015). Her obituary illustrates her personality beautifully:

Madame Cunovas taught ballet until a few weeks before her death believing that discipline and strength would keep her strong. Her continuing efforts toward perfection were reflected in her everyday behaviour and attitudes, including politeness, grooming, respect for others and grace. Her motto was that a dancer should look special. She will be remembered and missed for her energetic nature, sparkling voice and imparting her valuable knowledge of ballet with strength and conviction to the very end. (Helene, 2007)

When Berezowsky left Perth, she suggested that Leslie (Hanson) and I go to work with Madame Cunovas, who was teaching at Joan Stacy’s school in the city. We were preparing a ballet called the Foyer de la Danse, inspired by the pictures of the impressionist painter Edgar Degas. Cunovas coached us for this performance. She demonstrated the style of the Romantic ballerinas and had us moving easily in gorgeous, romantic tutus. We wore black velvet chokers around our necks, with flowers dressing our hair. The different coloured sashes were an indication as to which rank you belonged—at the Paris Opera, they ranged from Etoiles to Petits Rats. I remember Cunovas taking great pleasure in teaching and she conveyed this pleasure to her students.

I can confirm that Cunovas was exactly as described in her obituary. I remember her in later years being mischievous and fun to be with. Her sense of humour was effective when teaching, as she was able to create a lovely rapport with the students. She had a gorgeous smile and was kind, oh so kind. One incident I recall when she came to work with the teachers at Graduate College and we were presenting our students for assessments. She was standing next to me, and when this young man walked on to the stage she leaned over to me
and whispered, “You are teaching him to walk like a girl.” She emphasised the differences in technique between males and females. Later, we discussed how a male dancer walks. A stronger action forward to step on the count unlike the movement a female dancer employs when performing the action. The female action is softer using a développé to show beautifully arched feet.

Cunovas was a performer with a distinguished career in Russia and Austria. She knew the principles of the Russian training and also studied the RAD from Wilson. Her knowledge of the Classical and Romantic ballets was much in demand by both students and professional dancers. Within a year, she followed Berezowsky to Melbourne.

Kira Bousloff OAM (1914–2001)

The penultimate member of this group of immigrant teachers is Kira Bousloff OAM (Figure 23), whose parents were White Russians who left Russia before the revolution to settle in Monte Carlo (Hough, 2016). She studied ballet with Lubov Egorova, Mathilda Kschessinska, and Olga Preobrajenska among others in Paris. Her obituary states that she was a pioneering teacher of ballet in Australia (V. Lawson, 2001). She arrived on the east coast of Australia in 1938 as a member of the Covent Garden Russian Ballet, which included dancers from Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010, p. 171). After arriving in Perth in 1952, she and her second husband James Penberthy determined to stay and she formed the WAB (Hough, 2016). Bousloff began rehearsals in November 1952 for its premier performance in July 1953, a preparation period of nine months (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010). The interviewees in this research regard her efforts to form a ballet company and her influence on the dance scene as very significant (Asotoff, interview, December 18, 2015; Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015; Meade, interview, November 17, 2015; Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016).

As a young student, Charlesworth recalls meeting Bousloff when she came to teach temporarily at a suburban school in Melbourne. Bousloff was teaching at the National Theatre Ballet School, where opera, ballet, and drama were taught: “Kira with her wonderful personality. It wasn’t just the personality but her passion for dance; she was just so
extroverted, so she captured us all. It was the power within these people” (interview, November 16, 2015). Charlesworth, at age 16, met Bousloff again in Perth in 1952: “I remember going to the boatshed in Barrack Street and she was so excited. You have to come back. She said, ‘we have a season coming up, come back and join the company’” (interview, November 16, 2015).

In response to the question of whether they used a system, Charlesworth said:

No, because a lot of them hadn’t been through a teacher’s course. They came out of the profession and they taught as a professional dancer, they were taught quick, quick, to get there quickly. I am pretty sure they took what they knew and developed their own. It was more based on a professional class but at the same time Kira did give us a varied class. You know the barre, not so much centre practice but the allegro made up of small jumps then medium jumps. She did a barre with every exercise, the pliés, the tendus, the jetés, etc. I would be so sure there that there was no real syllabus there. (interview, November 16, 2015)

Asotoff recalls that Bousloff did not really know much about anatomy: “you did it [the exercise] until you get it right which meant so often you do the wrong thing over and over again until it becomes so embedded in your system that you were stuck with it” (interview, December 18, 2015). She added that Bousloff did not speak about musical theory but she was very sensitive to music and of course being married to James Penberthy, a musician, added another dimension…. she probably knew more than what she said other than the feeling. It gets louder and louder so jump higher. She was interpreting the music. (interview, December 18, 2015)

One incident at that time was to pave the future direction of dance in Perth. Wilson was keen to have Bousloff as one of her teachers and she welcomed her to her studio with open arms. Subsequently, Bousloff and her husband were invited to the Georges’ home in Gooseberry Hill: “Monday morning class—wow! Linley was in a terrible mood and so was Keith and nobody knows what happened. If those two had got together things would have been very different for WA” (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). Wilson’s training of dancers, attention to detail and musical awareness combined with Bousloff’s stage experience and ability to develop musicality and artistry would have been a winning combination in the presentation of professional productions. Both were creative and presented their own choreographies, though Wilson did not produce any new work after marrying George (Cruickshank, personal communication, December 29, 2016). In the early years of the company, Bousloff required well-trained dancers for productions. Many of the older students from the schools of Wilson and Stacy succumbed to the temptation of performing rather than continuing their training. Cruickshank recalls that this caused a rift because Wilson did not
like students to go to other teachers until they had finished their training, as she felt that interference might affect the purity of their style (interview, November 11, 2015).

In my time, I remember dancers Judith Schonell, Beverly Twyford-Jones, and Marianne Van Kooten, all from Linley Wilson’s school, coming to take part in WAB productions. Three dancers from Joan Stacy—Stevens, Hanson, and I—also joined, with others coming at a later date. Whether Wilson’s students had permission to take part in Bousloff’s productions I am not sure. I do know that Stacy gave her students her blessing and came to watch performances.

My own memories of Bousloff relate to her natural ebullience and her persuasiveness. She could get any man, woman, or child to do what she wished. She was also quite impulsive, and I loved the way in which she introduced the ‘Russian Dash’ as we named it; where at the end of a performance we would all run forward to take a bow matching the audience’s enthusiastic applause with our own delight and pleasure.

Asotoff understood Bousloff well and explains that she knew what she wanted:

the sort of things that I found very amusing. How she would very blatantly crawl to people if she wanted to have something done. No one ever said no to her. She capitalised on her French background a lot. She would stamp her foot and wave her arms—it added colour to the place…. Oh, Papa so and so, we need something. Her nature was such that nobody ever said “no” to her. (interview, December 18, 2015)

Atkinson took classes with Bousloff and reiterates that it was Bousloff’s personality that attracted students to her. She gave such “dancey classes…. It was really her enthusiasm and theatricality” (interview, December 11, 2015). She adds that Bousloff gave them technically harder movements, and “it was good for them to try” (interview, December 11, 2015).

Gowers describes her attachment to Bousloff:

her compassion, her charm—she was kind; she was tough, and you would do anything for her. I absolutely loved her and adored her, and with bleeding feet and blood showing in my pointe shoes and crying my eyes out I would still dance for her. (interview, December 7, 2015)

The memories I have of Stacy’s studio and the studio above the Grand Theatre where Bousloff worked are similar, but there was a difference. They were both above street level with many stairs to climb; one was clean, with no decoration, the other had pictures of dancers on the walls. Mainly, they were of Bousloff or her dancer friends. They were signed with messages written across the photograph. It gave me the impression that I was in the company of greatness. These teachers would give me what I wanted—to be a ‘ballerina’.
Bousloff was an important protagonist for the Perth dance community. Her vision to form a performance group proved to be the key to her success. On her arrival, she had a disagreement with Wilson but carried on with the support of her colleagues to achieve her aim of creating a state dance company. Bousloff was awarded an OAM in 1987 for her contribution to dance and the arts in Perth. She was named a Western Australian State Living Treasure in 1998 and was honoured in 2000 with the Lifetime Achievement Award for Dance by Australian Dance Awards (Hough, 2016).

**Gunhild Sobkowiak-Ferris OAM (1922–)***

![Figure 24: Gunhild Sobkowiak-Ferris, c. 1980. Photographer unknown.](image)

Licentiate: ISTD, 1972

The youngest member of this group of teachers, Gunhild Sobkowiak-Ferris (Figure 24), was born in Vienna, Austria, as Gunhild Supchik. She studied at the Vienna State Opera School and had achieved the rank of Principal Dancer with the Vienna State Opera Ballet Company before coming to Australia with her first husband, Jan Sobkowiak (Sobkowiak-Ferris, personal communication, June 21, 2012). She explains that there were two streams, classical and character, and she was in the latter (personal communication, June 19, 2016). Her forte was her interpretation of dramatic roles and often the character dances, such as the leading dancer in the Czardas or Mazurka from the ballets of *Swan Lake* and *Coppélia* (personal communication, June 21, 2012). On their arrival in 1950, she and her Polish husband settled in Northam in a migrant camp and some two years later they relocated to Perth (personal communication, June 21, 2012). When she heard about Bousloff’s endeavours to begin a ballet company, she was thrilled. She sought out Bousloff and went on to perform with the company and eventually became Assistant Artistic Director (Asotoff, interview, December 18, 2015).

I am reminded that my mother and I first saw Sobkowiak-Ferris when she worked at Betts & Betts, a shoe shop in Hay Street in the city. This was her day job, a fact I did not realise at the time. I recognised her after seeing her dance at a company performance. At that time, I did not speak with her. Much later, she described her frustration and disappointment when first arriving in Perth and realising there was nowhere to dance. I imagine she was expecting the same opportunities for dance as in her hometown of Vienna.
Asotoff, who worked with Sobkowiak, says “Gundi was the most useful thing that Kira could have. Kira had the ideas and then it was up to Gundi to carry them out in class or rehearsal” (interview, December 18, 2015). Until 1969, Sobkowiak-Ferris was still working with the company but had taken over Wulffius’ school and Diana de Vos’ school in Dalkeith. A former student of hers recalls:

Madame Gundi placed a broom handle threaded between her arms to control and manage the hyper-flexibility of her shoulder and elbow joints. She remembers another trick of hers was to use pins to encourage students to place their weight on top of their legs. Most effective! (Ballantyne, personal communication, June 14, 2016)

Figure 25: Sobkowiak-Ferris instructing student Janine Knott, c. 1980s. Photograph courtesy of Sobkowiak-Ferris.

My knowledge of Sobkowiak-Ferris comes about through a lifelong friendship, which started when I was a 15–year–old in the ballet company. I know her to have a charming but tenacious personality; she has had to contend with personal and professional setbacks but through her life her passion for her art has sustained her. I recall her hard work in the studio, insisting that the dancers meet the demands of the choreography. Her award for services to the arts was achieved because of her involvement in the establishment of the WAB and her dedication and perseverance with her students (Figure 25), some of whom are still working in the profession. They love her and show their appreciation on her birthday and at Christmas.

With her performance experience at the Vienna State Opera Ballet, Sobkowiak-Ferris was a very effective member of this European cohort of teachers. Asotoff (interview, December 18, 2015) reports that Sobkowiak-Ferris performed with the WAB as a Principal Dancer then continued as Assistant Artistic Director until 1973. Through her own school, she has been an inspiration to several generations of students, some of whom achieved professional success. She was awarded an OAM in 1999.
This first-generation’s teaching styles were described as “dancey,” “energetic,” “musical,” and “dramatic” (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015; Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015; Gowers, interview, December 7, 2015). The interview participants spoke about their lives in Europe: in particular geography, language, and cultural differences were shared. These second-generation ‘students’ have gone on to play prominent roles in the development of ballet in WA, as they have continued to build on these experiences. In their interviews presented in the following section, they tell of their careers and achievements.

**Second generation**

The participants featured in this section all have associations with the first generation of European teachers. The metaphor of the tree trunk illustrates the second generation of this lineage, represented here by Terri Charlesworth, Irina Asotoff, Diedre Atkinson, and Hélène Gowers. Opportunities for collaboration with the second generation of the English lineage have occurred during this period. Analysis of the data shows a period of strong growth for this generation in this fast-evolving arts industry, as they were attempting to ‘catch up’ with the trends in training, choreography, and design in Europe (Glasstone, 1983).

It seems prudent to begin by following the various twists and turns that influenced Charlesworth’s life and career, which spans the period of this European lineage. The narratives of Asotoff, Atkinson, and Gowers will complete and substantiate the outcomes of the data, while providing their own different perspectives of the period.

**Terri Charlesworth OAM (1935 –)**

*Lifetime achievement Award 2017 awarded by Ausdance.*

Charlesworth, Artistic Advisor of the Charlesworth Institute, was born in Perth, the second child of Irish-Catholic parents (Figure 26). She remembers her grandparents, whose influence consolidated her strong Catholic roots. Her mother was a very political “Irish socialist” from Melbourne, and her father left when she was quite young: “I did not get to know my father very well at all” (interview, November 16, 2015). During the war, her mother worked in an ammunitions factory to support the family. Charlesworth recalls: “my mother had a feeling of
world peace. She had affiliations with the leftist movement and I remember Frank Hardy, a prominent author coming to our house” (interview, November 16, 2015).

Charlesworth lived in Chelsea, a suburb about 20 miles out of Melbourne. One day, when she was about five or six years old, she saw children dancing on the road and asked her mother if she could join them. Her classes began in a suburban hall where the teacher “put me on toe shoes” (interview, November 16, 2015) and recommended that she continue studying at a school in the suburb of Malvern. Her mother could not afford it, but made every effort for her to continue her dance studies. It was at this new school that Charlesworth met Margaret Walker, an enterprising woman who influenced her considerably (interview, November 16, 2015). In some ways, Walker’s visions of world peace coincided with her mother’s left-wing ideas. Walker, who had been a dancer with the Borovansky Company and later Director of Dance Concert (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010), gave Charlesworth material on the Russian ballerinas Galina Ulanova and Maya Plisetskaya. Some years later, in 1952, Charlesworth returned to Perth for a holiday and met Bousloff at the boatshed studio on Barrack Street jetty. Bousloff said to her: “you must come back; we have the season coming up” (interview, November 16, 2015). Charlesworth returned to Melbourne and packed her bags, booking a flight to Perth with the money inherited from her grandfather: “a birthday present! He had saved 10 pounds every year” (interview, November 16, 2015). On arrival, she immediately went to class and met Berezowsky, Cunovas, and Sobkowiak-Ferris.

Charlesworth worked with the WAB until she went to Russia, China, and England in 1957, a trip she described was “like utopia—I was on another cloud” (interview, November 16, 2015). In London, Charlesworth studied with Audrey de Vos:

> a woman, who had previously been a physiotherapist, opened up for me a lot of anatomical knowledge. She executed the whole floor barre and the turning in, tuning out. What I did not realise at the time was that the ‘tuck under’ prevented your jump. (interview, November 16, 2015)

De Vos influenced a whole generation of teachers, which was important to the development of dance teaching in Australia. It was through Charlesworth and later Lucette Aldous that de Vos’ principles influenced teachers in Perth (Potter, 2014).

Charlesworth said she did not choose teaching as a career but fell into it because there was no money as a professional ballet dancer:

> I just love dancing and teaching—I don’t think I would be so happy teaching academic subjects…. I just love to see the bodies change in front of me. Someone from the Education Department said to me, “you must be creative.” If you really
understand classical ballet and the way in which you can change people’s bodies, the poses they make are their own poses with their own bodies. There was no getting through to him. No! You have to stand up and do it with a turned-in leg to be creative. They have no idea. (interview, November 16, 2015)

This change of direction from performer to teacher occurred for reasons such as lack of employment and personal injuries (interview, November 16, 2015). After marriage, several of the participants made this transition, as they wished to work in the field that they loved.

Diedre Atkinson began studying with Charlesworth at the age of five (Figure 27) and explains that Charlesworth differed from her other teachers because

you work on the detail of how to do the movement…. I do not remember doing syllabus for a whole year, it was always unset classes, probably structured in a way that you were learning the material as you go. (interview, December 11, 2015)

Figure 27: Charlesworth centre, working with students. Courtesy of Diedre Atkinson.

Atkinson also shed light on Charlesworth’s teaching style:

she was a very musical teacher so she taught in a musical way. We were fortunate to have pianists for a lot of our classes in those early years. I think she approached her work in an anatomical way, she did not use images as a way of teaching, nor did she use specific anatomical language. Terri has been a person that has investigated and found different ways of teaching, and I believe she is a far-sighted teacher. Terri was also good at taking risks. (interview, December 11, 2015)

Stevens claims she did not gain from Charlesworth’s influence until well into her teaching career. She recalls sitting in on one of her classes:

I learned more from Terri Charlesworth and you [the researcher]. I began to understand my body and look at other dancers and say how come I have these chunky legs and why have they got long slim ones? What am I doing? Because I am intelligent and realised I had to get better, I started looking and going to Marika Besobrasova’s courses. I rang Terri and asked if I could come and watch her classes,
and to her everlasting credit she welcomed me to sit in on class. I thought how do they get those legs, and watched. She was lifting them up on their legs. I was seeing the long slim legs, then the shoulder lines, and the upper body, and thinking I want to get that, and I was just so chuffed when after a while it began to come. I owe her a huge debt of gratitude for that. (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016)

Charlesworth admits that at that time she believed “dance belonged to the people, the masses” (Spillman, 1998, p. 4), which stems from her Catholic background and sense of fair play. She states that this view was completely opposite to Wilson’s belief that ballet was elitist (interview, November 11, 2015). In the early 1970s, Charlesworth created a full-time programme for the Graduate College of Dance and later a programme called the Junior Professional Group, with daily classes for young students “who possessed the ability and desire to pursue careers in dance” (Spillman, 1998, p. 5). Her association with de Vos stimulated her to find further information in texts by Sparger and Lawson, used as resources in the college from the 1990s. Other texts she found informative were Dance Kinesiology (Sevey-Fitt, 1996) and Muscles: Testing and function (Kendal & McCreary, 1979).

Charlesworth’s generosity to her students and other teachers can be confirmed by my own experiences with her as a colleague. What she learned as a student and a performer she passed on to her students. Her commitment to dance and her achievements for the Graduate College of Dance are recorded by Spillman (1998). In 1994, she received an OAM. Charlesworth will continue to contribute to the following chapters because of her involvement with future generations of ballet professionals.

Irina Asotoff (Norris) (1941–)

President of the AICD (WA)

Irina Asotoff, Principal of the Irina Asotoff Ballet School, (Figure 28) came to Australia at the age of 16 and a half in December 1957 (interview, December 18, 2015). Her mother was from St Petersburg and her father’s family was with the Tsarist Army based in Omsk. When the revolution began, both families had to leave Russia. They fled through China to Shanghai and then to Europe. Her parents met and married in Serbia. King Peter of Serbia made Russian migrants welcome because they were seen as more educated, upper-class people:
“They had the same religion and similar language; the same Cyrillic script is used for both Russian and Serbian” (interview, December 18, 2015).

I was born there when bombs were falling and Germans running all over Belgrade. My father got a job in Austria so we actually spent the war years living there. At the end of the war, my parents divorced and my mother and I lived for about six months in Slovenia. My mother thought she would get a job in a particular town but on our arrival, she did not like what she saw so we stayed on the train until we hit the Adriatic Sea. My mother always had to live where it was beautiful; she liked to paint and write poetry. (interview, December 18, 2015)

Asotoff’s education was extensive. She studied anatomy, music theory, mathematics, literature, languages, and anthropology, which was the collective name for physiology, geography, and history (interview, December 18, 2015). It was in Opatija, Croatia, that Asotoff began ballet lessons: “A couple of Viennese ladies ran a creative dance school” (interview, December 18, 2015). Later she auditioned at the theatre in Rejeka: “The lady running the classes was Russian and as I was only nine; she suggested I could stay and give it a go” (interview, December 18, 2015). She had male and female teachers who taught the Vaganova System. She stayed until her father invited her to Australia. He had remarried and was doing quite well as a chemical engineer in Perth, where he said there was a Russian woman teaching ballet, so she could continue dancing (interview, December 18, 2015).

Asotoff’s performance experience was considerable. In Croatia, the school was run by the ballet department of the theatre, and students could take part in both operas and ballets: “I was the smallest person in the class and I must have been fairly good because they always picked me” (interview, December 18, 2015). In her five years with the WAB, Asotoff performed in several productions, including Giselle, Swan Lake Act Two, and La Boutique Fantasque. She went on tours around the state and visited Darwin, Kununurra, and Bachelor within three years of her arrival. As the company was quite small, there was no hierarchy and it was possible to take a principal role in one production and a relatively minor role in the next. This was not possible in the system from which she came:

I saw that in the very professional communist country, dancers worked until they retired on pensions at the age of 42. And so, you saw these 40–year–olds coming to daily classes but after the barre they would go and have a coffee. (interview, December 18, 2015)

Asotoff’s teaching career began while she was still dancing: “A lot of dancers at the ballet company were talking about teaching. I thought possibly that would be a good thing for me” (interview, December 18, 2015). Charlesworth asked her for assistance with her school while
she went on maternity leave. From that opportunity, Asotoff gained considerable experience. She enjoyed working with children and discovered how others managed their ballet schools. Her desire to teach dance caused conflict with her father, who felt that her knowledge of six languages would enable her to get a better-paying job. He suggested that she become “an interpreter, but my stepmother thought that an interior designer would be a suitable occupation” (interview, December 18, 2015). She preferred dancing and started a ballet class.

At that time, she met and married her husband, Alan Norris, a pianist who played in a three-piece band: “Playing for a ballet class came as a shock to him” (interview, December 18, 2015). Asotoff began her classes in the Returned Serviceman’s League Hall in Midland:

> It had a wooden floor and a badly out-of-tune piano, but was close to the train and bus station. The hall had two rooms and was very dirty and dusty. I would go to the hall an hour earlier to sweep and mop up and some pleasing ballet pictures completed the transformation. (interview, December 18, 2015)

She admits to being ambitious when she began teaching, but she only had her own experiences to inform her teaching practice:

> Everyone was asking for RAD. I had never heard of this method, and it was no use asking Bousloff because she mixed up all of the syllabi. She took what she liked from the Cecchetti method and the principles used by the Russians and French…. Mrs Haesler came to my rescue, Gundi and Madame Nadine also. They watched me and gave me advice. (interview, December 18, 2015)

Asotoff’s decision to work with the Borovansky system came about through the urging of Bousloff: who said “We Russian women must stick together” (interview, December 18, 2015). On her arrival in Perth, Asotoff maintained her wish to stay with dance. With help from first-generation teachers of both lineages, she began her career in conditions that were less than perfect but grew her school and reputation considerably. She produces a yearly concert where her students are able to perform newly acquired skills (Figure 29). She is now the President of the AICD (WA), which delivers the examinations for the Borovansky method.
Diedre Atkinson (1954—)

*Head of Dance, John Curtin College of the Arts*

Diedre Atkinson was born in WA grew up in Mt Yokine, a northern suburb of Perth (Figure 30). Her parents are Western Australians with ancestors from England and Scotland, but she was trained by Charlesworth, who is strongly linked with the European lineage (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015). Her mother, Margaret Corser studied ballet with teachers Ida Beeby (Patch Theatre) and Linley Wilson (interview, December 11, 2015). She was offered the chance to work with the Borovansky Ballet, but chose marriage instead and worked as a seamstress. Her design skills and ability to sew costumes were in great demand for student performances. She was a senior teacher at Graduate College of Dance for two decades and encouraged her daughter Diedre to
dance, enrolling her at the Terri Charlesworth School of Ballet at the age of five (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015). Atkinson recalls, “I trained only with Terri up until the age of 11. I remember a fantastic summer school in a studio in Irwin Street Perth. We had some creative dance with Keith Bain” (interview, December 11, 2015). Other opportunities came about when Bousloff started the Youth Ballet Company:

I did Nutcracker and there was Perth City Ballet with Diana Waldron. I also did my Intermediate and Advanced exams at the same time. Remember we had those private lessons? I was doing classes everywhere—with Norma Atkinson and at Linley Wilson’s studio. (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015)

Atkinson’s memories of her teachers, Charlesworth and Bousloff, have been recounted above. In her interview (December 11, 2015), Atkinson reflected on Charlesworth’s teaching:

I got completely brainwashed in the way of doing things. I had so much belief in the way she taught, that the window that you have open to try new things was closed. I remember specifically in Iran that I was blocked to the principles of the Russian teachers particularly about the opening of the legs in second stretching the ligaments attaching the legs to the pelvis. Terri at that time was bringing the leg forward but in a rotated way and I remember being very resistant to any change.

As a student dancer, Atkinson was employed by WAB for a wage of $25 a week. The programme for her first season was Pineapple Poll and Death of a Maiden (interview, December 11, 2015). Later seasons included the ballets Street Games, Flower Festival at Genzano, and Woman of Ardross. Tours consisted of “a trip to the east coast and intra-state performances” (interview, December 11, 2015). Her contract was not renewed after 12 months; she continued to work at the Creative Dance Centre, a full-time teaching venture founded by Charlesworth and Margita Chudziak (Spillman, 1998, p. 4). Then she “spread her wings” (interview, December 11, 2015), flying to London and taking classes with Johnnie O’Brien: “a whole hour of conditioning, not ballistic stretching but another kind of stretching in rhythm. We worked on the floor and then did moving activities before starting class” (interview, December 11, 2015). This helped alleviate the tension that hampered her movement quality. She then joined the Iranian National Ballet Company: “That was fantastic as it was a big company and we did big works such as Fountain of Bakhchisaray and La Fille Mal Gardée” (interview, December 11, 2015). On her return to Perth, she auditioned for the Queensland Ballet Company, and its Artistic Director Harry Haythorne liked her dancing. However, he found out that she had also auditioned for Disney on Parade and did not employ her. In Disney on Parade, she had experiences with several teachers, including Ronnie
Arnold, and different styles such as African dance: “I loved the structure of the company, you had class and rehearsal not just performance” (interview, December 11, 2015).

Atkinson’s teaching career began while she was still performing. She taught RAD at Charlesworth’s studio from the age of 12: “This is what all schools seem to do now; they get these young students and they get them into teaching and that connects them to the studio, they do not move elsewhere. A good tactic” (interview, December 11, 2015). She was asked to join Kinetikos, a group formed as an extension to the Creative Dance Centre. The dancers in the group received training and worked as apprentice teachers in the suburban network of schools connected to Charlesworth’s dance business (Spillman, 1998, p. 6).

After the establishment of WAAPA in 1983, Atkinson was accepted into the inaugural cohort of students for the BA degree course in 1989. Her purpose was to get a degree, a qualification that enabled her to teach in a state or public school as teachers’ hours in public schools permitted her to work at a time that suited her personal situation. Atkinson graduated from WAAPA in 1993.

Most ballet teachers in the private sector work anti-social hours on evenings and weekends. Atkinson says about her transition from a dancer to a teacher “I didn’t think I can’t be a dancer so I will just be a teacher. I always wanted to have the opportunity to pass that knowledge on. I think it is connected to performance and I enjoy performing” (interview, December 11, 2015).

Atkinson was very open about her former teachers, explaining what she admired about them as individuals and as professionals, with great respect. Her experiences reveal that students in Perth in the mid-1960s did not remain with one teacher. She is one of the first teachers to have tertiary dance training, including teacher training, and now occupies an influential position as the Head of Dance and Ballet at John Curtin College of the Arts. Subsequent chapters will explore her experiences with the teachers of the second wave of pedagogical influences and dance teaching practices from Europe and the eastern states of Australia.
The final player in this generation of teachers is Heléne Gowers, CEO of the Heléne Gowers School of Ballet (Figure 31). She was born in Australia; her mother is English and her father Greek. “I went to Greece and Thessaloniki and saw where the monks lived. I thought, this is my heritage and it is beautiful but I have no connection. I am Australian” (interview, December 7, 2015).

Gowers credits her mother for fostering her keen interest in ballet: it was my mother’s influence which led to my involvement with the arts. She took me to the theatre in the first place to see Kathy Gorham in *Don Quixote*. I saw the first half, slept through the second half, clapped like mad at the end then danced around the house for days until she took me to see Madame Bousloff at the studio above the Grand Theatre in Murray Street in the city. She always encouraged my artistic bent. (interview, December 7, 2015)

Her main teachers were Bousloff and Kiril Vasilkovsky (interview, December 7, 2015). At that time, Bousloff was teaching the RAD Grades Syllabus and Gowers recalls that she did a Grade One examination at the Royal Australian Air Force Association Hall in Adelaide Terrace. Her mother took her there; she went into the hall by herself. She did not find it too daunting and remembers that she performed the *Sailors Hornpipe*.

Later, Bousloff changed her teaching methods to that of the Cecchetti syllabus. Gowers felt that Shelley Rae, Bousloff’s business partner, and Vasilkovsky did try to structure their classes but with Bousloff the aim was simply to dance. Bousloff was accustomed to doing a company class and that is all she did: “she would have had this inbred sense of the Cecchetti feeling because of her training through the Ballets Russes” (interview, December 7, 2015).

The studio was on the third floor, “a huge big studio on the corner of King and Murray Streets,” and they always had a pianist:

Madame would give very long adages and she would either sing them or vaguely count. You would do a penché here and a promenade there and then we would do a pirouette in attitude and pas de bourée into something else and go on for about five minutes. Everybody would be saying, what was first? Then she would say “ready and.” We did it and made it fit the music. We soaked it up and did it. (interview, December 7, 2015)
Gowers expands:

It was probably wrong all these years. Madame and Kiril were very theatrical, it was all passion and everything was out there to perform. Later it became more clinical when you had to concentrate on turning out and pulling up and actually doing exercises properly. It was some time later around the age of 18 that I came to this understanding. When I was studying for my Advanced Cecchetti Examination. Thinking oh my god! (interview, December 7, 2015)

As a student, Gowers took part in performances. She was a mushroom in Snow White at His Majesty’s and at 11 worked with WAB in a performance of Prince Igor at the Sunken Gardens (interview, December 7, 2015). Later, she got together with an enthusiastic group of young dancers to form the Serenade Ballet Company and toured locally (interview, December 7, 2015).

The opportunity to teach came through a contact of Shelley Rae. A teacher who wanted to withdraw from some of her branches in the country asked if Gowers would be interested in taking them over. She accepted the challenge (interview, December 7, 2015).

So begins the story of Gowers’ teaching career. She would leave on Friday to teach at Bencubbin and come back through Koorda to teach there on Saturday morning, then at Wyalkatchem in the afternoon, and then drive home. From there she went to Toodyay and Bolgart. She subsequently maintained Toodyay and Bunbury, where she taught Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for five years (interview, December 7, 2015). When studying the Advanced Extant Examination and her Associate, she took classes every day and taught at the same time. This benefitted her teaching because it “focuses your eye…. Then you have to be very careful as a teacher that you demonstrate everything correctly and that was when you had to think about how you were doing things yourself. Hey that is what I do” (interview, December 7, 2015). When asked about her teaching approach, Gowers said she hopes that she uses all her anatomical knowledge to teach the basic movement at the barre, but then in the centre she tries to get the feel of a more sophisticated movement first and have some fun. She tries to teach all the elements of the level being studied and only teaches the set exercises two months before the examination. She does not use the set music until then because “otherwise you feel just bogged down” (interview, December 7, 2015). She does not have pianists but uses her favourite CDs to choreograph specific exercises to encourage musicality.
To begin class, she will use a:

jazzy, boof, boof music to have an aerobic workout. I really insist that they do keep in time with the music. I hate it when they are out of time. I play them lots of different pieces of music. People have commented that my students are musical, so I am happy about that. (interview, December 7, 2015)

Gowers involves the students in discussions about the music to which they are dancing, asking if they recognise the pieces. Are they from a ballet you know? Do you know the names of the composers? She has some big classes: “I have a class of about 18 on a Saturday afternoon and that is a range from Grade Five to Advanced One. So, pretty diverse, but it is a good way to finish up the teaching week” (interview, December 7, 2015). Her school has five branches: Mt Lawley; the Banks Reserve Pavilion; Cecil Andrews High School, “where the gym is nice and clean but it does not have a good floor” (interview, December 7, 2015); Wesley College, which has a gym upstairs with a complete ballet studio with barres, mirrors, and a sprung floor; and a Scout Hall at Rathay Street, Victoria Park, which has a nice floor but no mirrors or barres. She also hires the studio at the Arts Centre in Subiaco (Figure 32).

Gowers teaches the Cecchetti method and has been on the committee of Cecchetti Ballet Australia in WA, organising events such as the annual joint summer school with the RAD. As a member of Cecchetti Ballet, she assists in the organisation of the Cecchetti Congress.

Gowers sees her profession as a calling, not a ‘job’. She continues to keep abreast of any new developments in the field by attending personal and professional development courses conducted by Cecchetti Ballet Australia. Gowers has just celebrated 40 years of annual productions (interview, December 7, 2015).
Summary

The development between the first and second generations of the European lineage was not vastly different from that of the English lineage except that all of these teachers were fortunate to have considerable performance experience, for which their mothers’ encouragement was essential.

Only one from the first generation qualified as a teacher in Australia, but all of the second generation have qualifications from one or more of the societies operating in WA. Entrepreneurial skills have enabled them to succeed commercially and to employ staff they had mentored, forming a new generation of teachers.

The likely catalyst that prompted the teachers of the European lineage to leave their homelands in search of a new life was the war in Europe. Perth was still experiencing wartime pressures, and their arrival invigorated the dance scene, adding colour and vibrancy to the teaching of this art form. The Europeans were drawn together through their ethnicity and an abiding interest in and passion for the performing arts. Their forceful personalities, vibrant style and exotic backgrounds engaged and inspired many who came in contact with them. They came with a knowledge of the ballets of the Romantic Era for which skilled local dancers were required to perform.
Bousloff was perhaps the dominant personality. Her boundless energy, drive, and ability to persuade others to support her aims was exciting to witness. Add perseverance and tenacity to that list of qualities and it is possible to see how so much was achieved. Three of the interviewees, Charlesworth, Atkinson, and Gowers agreed that there was a power within these people, an energy which had the greatest impact on local dancers. Their efforts to form WAB were indeed significant for ballet in Perth.

Through the activity of dance, relationships were formed between these new Australians and local students. They taught more than dance: they were musical and artistic, having been educated in the premier institutions of Austria, France, and Imperial Russia. Their enthusiasm for dance in all its glory, lyrical or dramatic, was clear. Some were more demanding, insisting that movements were carried out correctly. Others were not so fastidious over technicalities; they preferred to achieve movement quality through musicality and expression.

Among the second generation, Charlesworth and Atkinson have found that the Vaganova system complements their skills and assists them in following the training required for the profession. Asotoff has investigated other systems and moved to the Borovansky system; while Gowers found the Cecchetti system suitable for her needs. I continued teaching the RAD and Vaganova systems, enhanced by my experience of Greek and character dance.

The interviewed participants agreed that the outstanding influence of the first generation was essentially their enthusiastic approach and theatrical skills of dramatic expression. The animated conversations gave the impression that the lasting memories of their teacher’s methods continued to be fostered in their own practice. After interviewing the participants, it is possible to understand why they determined to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors. Their all-consuming commitment and interest in ballet have continued a legacy in Perth. Chapter five will concentrate on a time when the professionalism of the ballet teaching sector strengthens in Perth. A new wave of ballet masters came to Perth in the 1980s and new institutions were formed, once again building and developing ballet education.
Chapter five: Modern era

This chapter focuses on the development of classical ballet training in Perth during the late 1970s to early 1990s, the modern era. Distinguished guest teachers represented by the metaphor of water contributed to the pedagogic standards of this discipline: Marika Besobrasova, Laurel Martyn, Janina Cunovas, Irina Kolpakova, and Lubov Nikonorenko brought new insight to Perth with the wisdom of their ballet education from France and Russia. In addition, Dame Lucette Aldous’ experiences will be discussed as her connection to the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) is important for this narrative. Three other organisations are also discussed as exemplars of the infrastructure developed throughout this period: John Curtin College of the Arts, Graduate College of Dance, and Terpsichore Dance Centre. Two other important developments are discussed: the role of dance societies and the collaboration among local teachers in establishing regional advisory panels.

The metaphor of the tree trunk underlines the growth of the second generation whose experiences were described in Chapters three and four, but their development and contribution continued into the modern era. This generation have been dancers with WAB in their younger days, an opportunity that was provided through the efforts of the previous generation whose footsteps we followed “because ballet was a subject with which we were closely connected” (Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015).

Asotoff, Charlesworth, Gowers, Stevens, and Meade began by establishing classes for young students and then gradually, as demand grew, they provided classes for senior students who wished to continue dancing either for in-depth study or with the purpose of taking up dance as a career. These teachers contributed to the profession by working in the sector, while Cruickshank had less involvement until appointed Regional Organiser for the RAD at state level. After the formation of the WA Advisory Panel of the RAD, she accepted a voluntary role as chairperson. On my return from Sydney, I was employed by the Graduate College of Dance and contributed as a member of the RAD Advisory Panel.

New wave

In the 1970s and 1980s, international master teachers brought new wisdom and skill to the pedagogy of ballet in Perth. These new insights were recalled in interviews with Charlesworth (November 16, 2015), Atkinson (December 28, 2015), and Stevens (January 4,
2016), and by me as extremely influential in our practice. These international experts heralded a change in the conduct of local teachers with this new knowledge into technical, musical, and artistic approaches to ballet teaching (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016). These master teachers, including Cunovas and Martyn, who resided in Australia, introduced the vocabulary of the Russian school codified by Vaganova.

**Marika Besobrasova (1915–2011)**

Marika Besobrasova’s (Figure 33) history and the personal approach she preferred in her teaching practice has been documented in *The Art of Teaching Ballet* (Ward Warren, 1996). Besobrasova’s own method of teaching, based on Vaganova’s syllabus, emphasised the French manner and style of movement (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015). Her friendship with Rudolph Nureyev was important in her development, and she acknowledged “that he opened the world of dance for her…. she drew everything from him to develop a programme for older children” (Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015).

Besobrasova considered herself a master teacher: “as a master, I have the right to say anything to my pupils. I look further than just teaching—into their souls, not just at the skin” (as cited in Ward Warren, 1996, p. 15).

Besobrasova’s thoughts on music were profound: “I believe that without the shape created by rhythm there is no art” (as cited in Ward Warren, 1996, p. 34) and “to listen to the music because music is the soul in the muscle” (Aldous, interview, November 24, 2015). According to Charlesworth, Besobrasova taught “a very musical but complicated programme for young children,” which prepared them for advanced training, as knowledge of concepts such as square and circular time signatures and dance rhythms permit dancers to respond appropriately to the character or mood of the music (interview, November 16, 2015). She believed music should support the prescribed movement by giving the dancer information to alert the muscles, which then moved intuitively in accordance to its texture—strong or dainty, light or heavy (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015). Besobrasova spoke about the feel of musicality when using the arms. She always “reminded students to listen while they were moving and to match their body movement with the dynamic quality of the music” (as cited in Ward Warren, 1996, p. 35).
Anatomical knowledge with special focus on the muscular and skeletal systems of the body was important in Besobrasova’s teaching. This enabled her to understand how physical anomalies were likely to restrict the dancer. According to Stevens, her information assisted in the placement of the body, correct use of muscle groups, and crucially the placement of weight, aspects almost unknown in Perth at that time (interview, January 4, 2016).

My own chance to work with Besobrasova came in 1983 when I visited her in Monte Carlo to attend an international dance seminar. From the beginning, Besobrasova insisted on the use of breath. She said it was a function she took from Fokine—breathing and releasing. This impressed me so much that I constantly refer to the placement of the breath, with the inspiration for the movement coming from within and progressing, in her words, to “include the world.” At the seminar and in her sessions in Perth, we began by learning basic movements, progressing to the final form. Theoretical aspects were explained before we, trainee teachers, demonstrated the practical application of this theory. Finally, we were encouraged to articulate or demonstrate that knowledge among ourselves.

Teachers attending the course in Monte Carlo were given the opportunity to watch classes by both Besobrasova and Alexander Urzuljak, Director of the John Cranko Ballet School in Stuttgart. The themes covered were postural control and placement from the early years of study with special attention to coordination and musicality. The necessity of understanding the body in order to achieve plasticity of movement in adage, and strength and lightness for turns and allegro was the next phase. Once the technical standard was achieved, the focus was on further development of port de bras and artistic expression. Practical classes for teachers included information on specific vocabulary with French language names translated and analysed, and correct execution demonstrated. Teachers were made aware of common faults occurring through physical anomalies resulting in poor execution.

On another occasion, I witnessed her ability to see what was wrong in a movement—a demonstration of her ‘x-ray vision’: A student was rising onto demi pointe with her posture incorrectly held. Calmly, Besobrasova suggested that she lift her eyeline; the improvement was immediate. I responded with a deflated, “why didn’t I see that?” She looked at me with her piercing blue eyes: “Darling, it is because I am older than you.” She rarely spoke down to another person, certainly I never heard her, but at times she could be very intimidating.

During these three weeks, I stayed in her apartment in Monte Carlo. In the evenings, she talked and I listened. She talked about the structuring of classes, and what steps matched and
worked for particular combinations. We talked about style, dynamics, music, and ways to encourage artistry. She insisted that everything taught in the classroom was necessary for performance on the stage. Two of her important mantras were “look at the person in front of you” and “to make all the information your own.”

**Janina Cunovas (1914–2007)**

Janina Cunovas (Figure 34) revisited Perth in the 1980s after living in Melbourne and teaching at the Australian Ballet School. She is also one of the first generation of European teachers who came to Perth. Cunovas embodied grace and femininity, qualities noted by Charlesworth’s compliment to Cunovas: “that was a lovely port de bras you have given them” (as cited in Ward Warren, 1996, p. 64). Her humble reply, “Oh we had such wonderful masters as teachers,” summed up her personality; she did not take the compliment for herself but paid tribute to the people who had taught her (Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015). Cunovas endeavoured to foster artistry, saying, “technique you can get from a teacher, but expression must be your own” (as cited in Ward Warren, 1996, p. 75). Her style and teaching came from her roots, as she held all the traditions of her Russian training very close to her heart (Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015). She had a sanguine personality perhaps because she never became personal; she gave positive encouragement and used humour effectively (Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015; Ward Warren, 1996). Cunovas was astute enough to learn the RAD syllabus from Wilson (Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015; Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). In the early days, she contributed her knowledge of repertoire, which she taught to Wilson’s students (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015).

When Cunovas made demands for perfection, she was always charming; never did she lose her temper if confronted with a question or if students had difficulties. I remember a discussion on the position of *cou de pied derriere*; for females in the Russian system, the foot is further crossed at the ankle slightly differently from that of the RAD. Her use of the music was unusual for the time as Cunovas used square time signatures frequently and when I asked her for an explanation she said it achieves greater precision in the movements. She generally uses circular rhythms for older students. In another class, she developed a rhythmical theme
of “one, two, three, and four” to inform the students of the different dynamics in that pattern, with her combinations of steps reflecting the musical structure.

Laurel Martyn OBE (1916–2013)

Laurel Martyn (Figure 35) was a frequent visitor to Perth in the 1980s. After serving as a performer and director of the Victorian Ballet Guild (Brissenden & Glennon, 2010, p. 147), she began teaching classical ballet. Martyn (1992) often said, “Movement is life: that movement is equally important as are the poses, one without the other does not make dance” (p. iii). According to Atkinson, Martyn’s approach to dance was different from others. That difference was her knowledge of what we now know as somatics. During the interview, Atkinson noted that Martyn used the techniques of imaging, ideokinesis and Alexander technique,” which “taught you how to construct a class in a way to understand the material which was to be taught” (interview, December 11, 2015).

In 1985 Martyn visited Perth regularly to give master classes and examine the Graduate College of Dance students (Spillman, 1998).

My impression of her—I was studying with her in Melbourne in 1961—was her sense of discipline; she demanded the same from her students. I recall once I had taken a class with Piotr Gusev from the visiting Maly Theatre Company of Russia; afterwards, Martyn asked if I was going on to her class. I “ummed and ahhed” and said I was too tired. She insisted it was at that point when one is tired that that you should keep going because in that way your stamina builds. I have passed this on to my students.

This new wave of teachers brought insight to the Perth ballet community regarding alignment, musicality, and artistry, and they taught varying methods of achieving a professional outcome. Stevens comments that her girls were pretty well placed but after she learned about the placement of the body and rotation of the legs, they started to lose their chunky thighs and bodies fined down (interview, January 4, 2016). These opportunities assisted the participants to lift the standard in their schools: “the teaching methodology suggests it is the slow building; each class should be built up like that. You have to get over to the kids that they do not take the easy way out” (Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015). Martyn’s contemporary view was echoed by her use of somatics and added further
insight to this discipline. The impact of these visitors is noted through their generosity to the teachers of Perth in imparting their vast knowledge of the methodology of both the French and Russian ballet schools.

**Public and private schools**

The select number of public and private schools discussed in this section is due to their connection with second-generation teachers and how they illustrate the developments of infrastructure supporting ballet pedagogy in Perth.

**John Curtin College of the Arts**

John Curtin College of the Arts (2015), formerly John Curtin Senior High School established in 1956, was one of the first independent public schools in Perth that aimed to provide drama, arts, and dance as specialist subjects for children across the state. Since 1973, the Education Department has supported programmes for gifted and talented dance students (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015; Sobkowiak-Ferris, personal communication, 19 June, 2016). However, in 1999, the Honourable Colin Barnett, as Minister for Education, approved the proposal to establish a school specialising in the arts; thus, John Curtin College of the Arts now provides the opportunity for high school students to enrol in an arts integrated curriculum. In 2000, it was given formal recognition for three decades of excellence (John Curtin College of the Arts, 2015). Atkinson, head of the College’s dance department, still uses information based on knowledge from Besobrasova but delivered by Janet Karin OAM at a course in Perth:

> I remember getting the correction from you but not understanding until Karin was moving my body onto my legs. If I think back to it the rising that we do and that Audrey de Vos exercise where you tucked your pelvis under and put your heels down, was all about bringing the weight into the correct place. Now I have that understanding and I know that when you bring your weight forward the effort goes. (interview, December 11, 2015)

Atkinson notes that the teaching methods at the College have developed from the backgrounds of her teaching staff: “I was definitely more influenced by the Vaganova material. I use Kostrovitskaya’s *101 Lessons* as a way of exploring and unpacking movement” (interview, December 11, 2015). Atkinson’s opinion is that the Vaganova teaches the whole body to dance from the beginning. In 2015, the new examination syllabus of the RAD was introduced for the year 9 students (interview, December 11, 2015).
Atkinson confirms the lack of boys in the programme and is adamant that there are never enough boys. Six boys were in the ballet programme in 2015. Recently she has employed several male teachers as role models for the boys and to develop their fitness. The material taught emphasises gymnastic exercise: “push ups, sit ups, to get them fit and later the male teachers demonstrate the male vocabulary for the younger male students” (interview, December 11, 2015). Students are encouraged to pursue further professional training at WAAPA (interview, December 11, 2015).

Facilities have grown since the time when classes were conducted in the gymnasium; now there are three studios and a theatre named for John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia. The addition of better equipped studios made it possible to attain a professional technical standard, and the theatre enabled the opportunities for performance experience. The theatre is also used by community groups such as the RAD Advisory Panel of WA for the annual Festival of Dance (Thomas, personal communication, September 1, 2016) and Cecchetti Ballet WA (Gowers, interview, December 7, 2015). Two heads of the Dance Department, Susan Cooke and Diedre Atkinson, were graduates from Graduate College of Dance and WAAPA (McCarthy, interview, December 8, 2015). Several graduates from this programme have continued at WAAPA to achieve an Advanced Diploma and BA qualifications, including the current Coordinator of Classical Ballet at WAAPA, Kim McCarthy (interview, December 8, 2015).

**Graduate College of Dance**

![Senior students at the Graduate College of Dance, c. 1990. Photograph courtesy of Karen McKnight.](image)

The Graduate College of Dance, under the direction of Charlesworth, was established in 1973 (Spillman, 1998) and provides a valuable exemplar of the development of the modern-day ballet school in Perth (Figure 36). From 1983, the college was housed in premises at 360
Murray Street, Perth (Spillman, 1998). According to Charlesworth, the college, under the leadership of a board of directors was operating as a not-for-profit organisation. It was the aim of the Director and the College board to continually enhance the standard of training; consequently, the concept of professional development for the staff was of vital importance (Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015). These changes to infrastructure and the commitment to excellence made it possible to develop the standing of the College in the Perth ballet community.

In 1977, Charlesworth visited Europe, returning with the idea of inviting international artists to Perth. Carlos Garcio, a Cuban and principal ballet master at the Vienna State Ballet Company, came in 1979 and 1980, followed by the Besobrasova’s visit from Monte Carlo in 1981 (Spillman, 1998). These were compelling events, not only for staff at the College, but for all Perth teachers who wished to take up this opportunity: “The information derived from these master teachers was not heard of in this city before” (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015). Besobrasova’s approach to teaching ballet was to look at the individual. She wanted to get the best from each student. She viewed the dancer as a whole as the technique informed the musical and artistic development. Teachers embraced her method and made it their own (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015).

At this time, a change of attitude to the practice of ballet teaching emerged and it can be argued that this eventuated through the efforts of Charlesworth, with her vision of professional training for Perth students. After her visit to European and Asian centres of ballet in 1957, Charlesworth thought “why can’t we do that?” (interview, November 16, 2015). Charlesworth explains that in 1976 a professional programme was provided by the college for “career-minded students.” The introduction of the Besobrasova method necessitated intensive training for all teachers within the college, as confirmed by Spillman’s (1998) account of the college history. This training was offered to teachers in the community who wished to improve knowledge and skills (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016).

Charlesworth utilises material from 101 Lessons (V. S. Kostrovitskaya, 2004) and Basic Principles of Classical Ballet (Vaganova, 1969) for structuring her classes: “I would use all the knowledge, musicality whatever” (interview, November 16, 2015). She confirms that the preparation of the body is paramount and that attention must be given in the early stages of training. An example is given of the progress of adage movement; when beginning, a relevé lent is done before a développé with the coordination of the head and shoulders in the preparatory stage: “What I do though, I suppose, is that I had a little bit of innate feeling for
movement all over my body, my head has always been part of the movement. I have never danced with it straight like this” (interview, November 16, 2015).

Charlesworth’s European connections facilitated the visit of Soviet ballerina Irina Kolpakova, trained by Vaganova and her husband Vladic Semyonov, who came as guests of the College in 1990/91 (Figure 37). Guest teacher Lubov Nikonorenko, former Kirov Ballet soloist from St Petersburg, was invited to work full time at the College in 1996 (Spillman, 1998). These Russian master teachers showed Western Australians the virtues of the method developed by Vaganova (Spillman, 1998).

In the following section, two students who studied at the Graduate College of Dance—Kim McCarthy and Jennifer Loth—relate the perceptions of their training from teachers who had worked with the new wave of master teachers.

Kim McCarthy (Figure 38), who came to the Graduate College of Dance in 1987, supports the view that it was run as a professional organisation:

> It was run as a ballet school, as it should have been. It was one of the leading ballet schools at that time. It had prestige and organisation. Yes, the students performed well; the training had foundation. A lot of very talented students went there; dancers came out of there. Between 1984–1990 a huge amount of very talented students went there and went on to do very big things. (interview, December 8, 2015)
The College trained many successful students who went on to successful careers in The Australian Ballet, Hamburg Ballet, Basle Ballet, and WAB, such as Miranda Coney, Sian Stokes, Tonya Batalin, Kim McCarthy, Jacinta Ross, Jayne Cooper, and Fiona Evans. McCarthy suggests that its success resulted from the teachers being on the same page, presenting a united and powerful front (interview, December 8, 2015). He admits to being rebellious and relates how he felt about his position as “one boy in a group of women”. McCarthy was the eldest of several other boys but had no male mentor:

I had no idea how to act appropriately…. it was hard I think for me to find what a boy needed to be, I think that it is always difficult for any young boy to recognise. I think I thought I knew who I was and I was still searching and basing my ideas who I should be on people like Sasha and on Shelley Rae even though she was a woman there was something about her, she was just powerful. (interview, December 8, 2015)

McCarthy continues with his observations in relation to the musical accompaniment in a large private school, where in most classes a cassette recorder provided the accompaniment. The problem was that the sound of the piano on the tape was not pleasing, coupled with the teacher running back and forth to stop the machine. Pianists were used for guest teachers, as there was little money for pianists and the same music was played over and over (McCarthy, interview, December 8, 2015).
In 1990, a productive collaboration began between the College and the Education Department: the middle school, years 8 to 10, were housed at Swanbourne High School (Spillman, 1998). In 1999, Perth Modern School in Subiaco provided (Spillman, 1998) purpose-built studios and facilities for administration and costume storage (Loth-Hornsley, January 12, 2016).

In this period, Jennifer Loth-Hornsley auditioned and was accepted into the year 7 class. Vaganova was the favoured system at the College and was taken at a very slow pace. Most of the class was spent at the barre and centre with little time jumping. Turns were taught later, “with everything built up really, really slowly” (Loth-Hornsley, interview, January 12, 2016). Loth-Hornsley loved her time at the College, explaining that she learned about attention to detail, staging a ballet, precision in corps de ballet work, coordination of eyes and head and being like a soft army with precision, spacing, timing, and counting (interview, January 12, 2016). Her first principal role was in The Nutcracker at the College, and the proximity of schooling and ballet education on one campus enabled her to finish year 12.

The Graduate College of Dance underwent a change in management in 2000 and now offers a progressive system of training, drawing upon valuable traditions from different schools of classical ballet. The final three years of training are endorsed by the Curriculum Council of WA.

Terpsichore Dance Centre

The Terpsichore Dance Centre was the first private ballet school in Perth to provide a full-time course with the qualification of a Certificate IV in Dance, which was approved by a panel of experts in the fields of Education and Arts and formally registered by the Industry & Training Council of Australia (Terpsichore Dance Centre, 1996). Leslie Hutchinson and Diana de Vos, after leaving the Graduate College of Dance, joined Stevens, Principal of the June Stevens Academy of Classical Ballet, in establishing and running the Terpsichore Dance Centre from 1997 to 2001 (Figure 39). Stevens provided the use of her premises as a greater opportunity for her students; this collaboration was a great learning process as information was filtering through the staff: “It was a long road and this was just the start” (interview, January 4, 2016).
The curriculum provided a fully professional course consisting of body conditioning, ballet technique based on the Vaganova Method, preparation for RAD examinations, repertoire, character, and contemporary technique. Pianists were employed for the practical classes with the exception of contemporary, RAD, and repertoire. Other classes covered anatomical theory, music theory in relation to dance, dance appreciation, and professional principles and practice (Terpsichore Dance Centre, 1996). Teachers involved were Ruth Osborne, Monica Wardman, and Susan Whitford. The registered training organisation for the centre was North Lake Senior Campus, where the students studied high school academic subjects.

I spent two decades teaching at the Graduate College of Dance where I had my first experiences with vocational level students. As I already had performance experience in classical and character dance, it was a pleasure to pass on this information to the next generation. Charlesworth allowed me opportunities and responsibilities that may never have come my way. During the 1980s I had the opportunity to work with the master teachers of the second wave from Europe. As a teacher, I learned to be particular and more demanding of my students. I also had chances to be creative, choreographing for many productions.

Terpsichore Dance Centre afforded me the experience of writing a Vocational Education and Training course for a Certificate IV in Dance, giving me more knowledge of advanced educational theories. I also had to work collaboratively with other community schools. These two organisations gave me and other teachers much experience while providing excellent professional training to many Western Australian students.
From 1993, I was also employed as a Vocational examiner with the RAD. This experience, with opportunities of travelling internationally, added to my expertise. By this time, the literature was available that supported much of what had been taught to us in sessions taken by the international visitors. I had access to Sevey-Fitt’s (1996) *Dance Kinesiology* and Grieg’s (1994) *Inside Ballet Technique*.

John Curtin College of the Arts, Graduate College of Dance, and Terpsichore Dance Centre were all developed through the efforts of the second-generation teachers. They do not represent the multitude of schools that have been established and continue to run today, but they provide an understanding of the formalisation and professionalism of ballet training in this era in Perth. The integration of various pedagogical practices from international sources with formal curriculum-based training models provided an upcoming generation of ballet students with new opportunities to aspire to a professional career in dance.

**The establishment of advisory panels in the community**

The WA Advisory Panel of the RAD was established in 1982 by Alan Hooper, then Artistic Director of the Academy, who visited Perth from London; the panel was elected from the membership with Sylvia Box as its first Chairperson (Asotoff, interview, December 18, 2015). Its objective was to promote RAD examination courses and provide performance opportunities for local students. Cruickshank’s motivation as local organiser and Chair of the Panel was to encourage the “teaching community to work together; if that happened it would be a big plus for WA” (interview, November 11, 2015). The panel would organise international or national examiners to conduct syllabi courses for teachers (Figure 40).

![Figure 39: English examiner Jean McDonnell conducting a teachers’ course in Perth, 1986. Photograph courtesy of West Australian Newspapers.](image-url)
They also provided opportunities such as classes conducted by guest teachers. Various ideas were presented for further events. Two possible activities were selected: a competitive dance festival (Figure 41) and a combined schools’ concert.

For the latter, some 25 schools entered a five-minute ensemble piece with the purpose of giving all students the opportunity to perform on a big stage. Performances were held at His Majesty’s Theatre, Burswood Theatre, and the Octagon and Dolphin Theatres at UWA. Penhros College and St Mary’s Anglican Girls School had performing arts centres that were made available to the community. The combined schools’ concerts continued until 2004 (Figure 42).
Another event, Awards and Scholarships, was held at WAAPA. Students who had entered the RAD examinations were eligible to perform a solo chosen from the classical repertoire and adjudicated by a visiting examiner. Prizes gave talented students encouragement and financial assistance (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015). Students from WA were taking part in competitions, both national and overseas, so the decision was made to combine the combined schools’ concert and the Awards and Scholarships. Its purpose was now a competitive dance festival, a training ground for students before attempting competitions elsewhere (RAD, 2015; Thomas, personal communication, September 1, 2016). These scholarships named in honour of the pioneering teachers, Wilson, Stacy, and Hodgkinson, have been of great value in both a monetary and historical sense to the winners. Many people, including teachers and parents of students, are responsible for the success of this venture (Stevens, interview, January 4, 2016).

The first Summer Dance was held in January 2002, a collaboration between Ausdance and WAB, directed by Ted Brandsen and the Cecchetti Society. Classes were taken by local teachers while the Associate Director of WAB, Judy Maelor-Thomas, taught the repertoire segment. This was a biennial event until the RAD Advisory Panel combined with the Cecchetti Society; since 2006 (Figure 43), it has been conducted annually with either the Cecchetti Society or the RAD taking charge in alternate years (Gowers, interview, December 7, 2015). Cruickshank gives Heather Baskerville, a former regional organiser, credit for the part she played on the panel. Baskerville wanted to get to “the grassroots” and encouraged better communication with teachers: “The barriers between teachers belonging to the RAD are less apparent than in the past” (Cruickshank, interview, November 11, 2015).
The WA committee of the AICD, with Irina Asotoff as President, also provided avenues for competitive experiences. All these organisations continue to operate on a voluntary basis to ensure opportunities for students to perform (Figure 44).
The collaboration of these community dance societies demonstrated the continued development of the Perth ballet community through the 1970s, 80s and 90s, which provided new opportunities and experiences for aspiring ballet students.

**Dame Lucette Aldous (1939–)**

![Figure 44: Lucette Aldous, c. 2000. Photographer unknown](image)

Honorary Doctorate of Letters, ECU 1999

Australian Dance Award for Lifetime Achievement 2009

Dame Lucette Aldous’ (Figure 45) career as a principal dancer in England and Australia is well documented (WAB, 2017). She has worked with international ballet companies; her stellar career includes partnering Nureyev in the production of *Don Quixote* with the Australian Ballet (interview, November 24, 2015). She was a lecturer in dance at WAAPA (1983–2005), and her involvement in the establishment of the institution and her contribution to this study is essential.

Born in New Zealand of English, Spanish, French, and Scottish ancestry, Aldous sees those national traits in her own character “especially when I reflect on Don Q …, when I look back on the actual interpretation, it was coming from somewhere—I wasn’t really aware” (interview, November 24, 2015). Aldous continues:

> there was elegant breeding on both sides: my great uncle was Head of the New Zealand Steamship Company. Grandmother was always gentle and could see the good in everyone. I always say thank you to my ancestors for nobility and gentility because they led their lives like that you know and I have really inherited that. (interview, November 24, 2015)

According to Aldous, her mother put all her energies into her progress as a dancer, taking the advice of Edouard Borovansky, who quoted Anna Pavlova: “you must not do classical dance until you are 10 because your bones are rubber and turnout is dangerous; you can do any sort of dancing but not classical dancing until you are 10” (interview, November 24, 2015). Ruth French, with Joan and Monica Halliday, taught her the RAD method. Her mother, who knew a little French, was able to translate the syllabus terminology and assist her practice: “I do recall that when you go into an arabesque you should never move and you can stay there all day” (interview, November 24, 2015).
Her parents were confused about which path Lucette should take, but they followed the advice of Robert Helpmann; Aldous went to England and the Royal Ballet School (interview, November 24, 2015). In 1955, she also worked with Audrey de Vos: “Turn-in, turn-out, the rotation of the leg in the hip socket, they call it limber or conditioning class which I loved” (interview, November 24, 2015). Aldous referred to de Vos’ propensity to mention Rene Descartes’ theory of the brain and admits how lucky she was to have teachers who had a different slant on things (interview, November 24, 2015).

Her introduction to the Cecchetti method came through Ninette de Valois at the Royal Ballet in London, who was sacking dancers for being overweight. A fellow student suggested Aldous go to a blind, orthopaedic surgeon, “who felt her legs…. Oh yes, you have fat in the muscle. You need to go on a high protein diet, 1200 calories per day and on days you are not hungry go on 900 per day” (interview, November 24, 2015). She lost weight. “I wasn’t born with a silver spoon in my mouth and this is a man-made body; short legs and a fat bum” (interview, November 24, 2015). Aldous admits that others said she looked like a monkey. Nureyev drew attention to her ears by asking “whether she shaded her ears,” and Rambert said, “I did not see you dance, all I saw were these little animal ears” (Aldous, interview, November 24, 2015). The international teachers with whom Aldous studied informed her future teaching practice. Aldous comments that de Valois said “we have Anglo-Saxon hips and should not attempt battement jeté” (interview, November 24, 2015). She explains that her teaching theories relied on her experiences: “We actually built on my experiences of fat thighs, of losing my turn-out when going to England because of the cold weather. It was all my experiences, but I levelled it down so people could understand” (interview, November 24, 2015). At that time, she was being asked to assist students with muscular legs (interview, November 24, 2015) and knew, from her own experiences from working with de Vos, how to prevent the build-up of the thighs. Her principles were developed by following the wisdom of others. Aldous says that she was always inventing and weaving around, using the theories of de Vos and of Dudinskaya. The latter said too much of Cecchetti’s work was on one leg, so it was better to change, do a nice port de bras and start on the other side (interview, November 24, 2015).

She worked with dancers who were not gifted with a dancer’s ideal proportions and facility. To overcome these physical problems, she believes the floor barre is paramount. Aldous believes that her experiences of touring and working with Ninette de Valois enabled her to develop theories to prevent injury. She explains that if you had a month off, you did barre
only for the whole week—no jumps whatsoever (interview, November 24, 2015). She became interested in the Vaganova method when she was working with Nureyev at the Australian Ballet. At 42, Aldous went back to Russia on a study tour. In class with Sophia Golovkina from the Bolshoi Ballet School, an explanation was given to justify why the correct execution of a port de bras can improve technique: “It is not just a pretty movement but has the purpose of stretching out the back muscles; it is all for practical reasons. No one had said this before” (Aldous, interview, November 24, 2015).

Her teaching career began in 1977 at the Australian Ballet School, under the direction of Dame Margaret Scott. She came to Perth in 1983 when WAAPA was established. In 2000 Dame Lucette Aldous of the Order of St John of Jerusalem gained an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from ECU. According to Aldous, it was because “she knew the steps but she went to the roots” (interview, November 24, 2015). Aldous refers to her ancestral roots, asserting that her ethnic background played a part in her success as a performer. She reiterates another common thread in the data, the role of mothers: her mother was a guiding force in her life. She acknowledges her teachers, claiming her practice is based on the experiences of others.

**Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts**

WAAPA opened its doors in 1983, and eventually provided the first tertiary dance programme to the Perth dance community. WAAPA at ECU was the brainchild of the founding Dean of Dramatic Arts, Geoffrey Gibbs AM (Aldous, interview, November 24, 2015). David Hough OAM managed the establishment of WAAPA from 1979 to 81. The academy was established through the amalgamation of the Colleges of Advanced Education. The colleges that showed the most interest in this proposal were Mt Lawley, Churchlands, and Claremont (Hough, personal communication, October 31, 2016). Hough reports that the Western Australian Post-Secondary Education Commission (WAPSEC) was formed to organise the establishment of WAAPA. It invited expressions of interest from the local community, mainly to gauge their reaction to this proposal of a training programme for elite dancers at tertiary level, in fact a finishing school for entry into the profession. The first question from local dance teachers was “who would be teaching?” (Hough, personal communication, October 31, 2016). It was apparent that the selection of lecturers would be difficult for the board. By this stage, the theatre course was already established, and music and dance were still in the planning phase.

Charlesworth recalls the establishment of this tertiary institution:
Graduate College of Dance had a board of beautiful people who had developed a tertiary course that was receiving funding approved under the Commonwealth Tertiary Allowance Scheme. In 1975, Malcolm Fraser, as Prime Minister, decreed that all funding for the arts should come through educational sources. A delegation from Graduate College of Dance approached the Secondary Teachers College at Mt Lawley to test their interest in this proposed course. “No” was the answer. (interview, November 16, 2015)

Charlesworth confirms that a committee (WAPSEC) was formed and that a practical course was wanted for musicians because the course at UWA was primarily academic (interview, November 16, 2015). The question of providing a course for dance was raised by Vaughan Hanly. Hough (interview, November 16, 2015) was also preparing a course.

The next step was to seek out individuals or institutions prepared to present a design for the proposed dance course. The competing ambitions of the dance community were active when it came to the survival of businesses and the elevation of Western Australians to positions of authority (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015; Charlesworth, interview, November 16, 2015). The establishment of WAAPA did cause ructions among the community of teachers, as most felt that they would be losing students. Aldous also mentions that there was opposition from WAB (interview, November 24, 2015). This was a tertiary course, enabling students to go straight into the profession rather than attending an overseas institute (Aldous, interview, November 24, 2015; Gowers, interview, December 7, 2015).

In 1982, Dame Peggy van Praagh, the first Artistic Director of the Australian Ballet, accepted the position of Coordinator of Dance Studies at WAAPA. Aldous says, “Geoff Gibbs wanted to start his academy and he wanted a name. Gibbs said I don’t care if they only walk across the room, so Dame Peggy’s name is up there” (interview, November 24, 2015). During the following year, Van Praagh realised she could not continue in this position because of ill health. Alan Alder accepted the position of Coordinator of Dance Studies in 1982, with Aldous as Lecturer in Classical Ballet. She stated at that time they only had a studio downstairs with parquet floor over cement: “They had 30 students, at least three from Victorian College of the Arts and two from Australian Ballet School, who followed us across the Nullabor in a westerly direction” (interview, November 24, 2015). Atkinson was in the first group that went through the academy:

The BA students had ballet—the Diploma course was basically replicated for degree students. For me the purpose of going there was to get my degree so that I could teach in the schools. I had the opportunity to work with Aldous, Alder and others in ballet. Contemporary teachers taught us one of Cunningham’s original dances. We did anatomy, kinesiology, alternative alignment principles and classes, which included
Feldenkrais and Alexander Technique. They did look at those early American pioneers who started to work in a different way, and this is where Laurel Martyn and Janet Karin developed their philosophy towards ballet teaching. (interview, December 11, 2015)

WAAPA continues to deliver Diploma and Bachelor courses to Western Australian, interstate and international students. The lack of community support did not deter the founders whose intention was to provide a tertiary level course, seen as essential for the profession; it also enabled Western Australians to continue their studies in Perth rather than travelling interstate or overseas. ECU endorsed the establishment of WAAPA, essentially offering specialist knowledge for theoretical and practical training for all performing arts.

Summary

In previous chapters, the balletic movement prescribed by English and European teachers in Perth was considered to be quite different in style and character. In this chapter, it has been noted that methods and styles are overlapping, with the likely reason being interaction of pedagogical philosophies from international sources rather than exclusively those of English origins. International master pedagogues had considerable impact on second-generation teachers. The style of the English school was ingrained in the practices of many of the participants, but the impact of these visitors with their knowledge of the French and Russian schools, their open-mindedness, and their generosity set an example for the profession.

Professional training began with the establishment of full-time programmes at secondary level in private ballet schools, such as the Graduate College of Dance and Terpsichore Dance Centre with accreditation from the Education Department. At John Curtin College of the Arts, a comprehensive syllabus in dance integrated with academic studies was introduced, a situation that was unheard of previously. The establishment of WAAPA was further progress, but its formation did cause discord among local teachers.

The dance societies provided courses for teachers, while the dance panels in the community provided extracurricular opportunities for students in the form of performances, summer schools and competitive dance festivals. These events were established as forums for teachers to mix with their peers and for students from all over the state; a diverse range of young people who loved to dance.

Several aspects enhanced ballet training in Perth, beginning with the performance experience of second-generation teachers that ultimately increased their teaching expertise. In later years, the flow of pedagogical knowledge from international sources was beneficial, without which
Perth may not have progressed so quickly. The contribution of dedicated teachers who willingly invested their efforts in growing the standard of ballet, while creating a legacy for future generations, enhanced the situation. An atmosphere of sharing and a spirit of collaboration resulted in the once insular character of Perth becoming more inclusive. Finally, males were showing an interest and participating in dance activities. The growth in this field during the modern era is seen as a result of the joint efforts of second-generation teachers building on the work of those who came before. Chapter six describes the outcomes of this era, activities that over the last two decades have contributed to the training of young dancers in Perth.
Chapter six: Reflections of the modern era

The third generation of teachers, characterised figuratively as branches of a tree, are now consolidating their professional careers. This chapter consists of interviews with teachers, professional dancers, and students, whose retrospective comments provide insight into the experiences of ballet training in Perth from the 1980s to the first decades of the new millennium. Interviewees Kim McCarthy and Jennifer Loth-Hornsley describe their early training in local ballet schools and their advanced training overseas. Reference is made to their performance experience overseas prior to crossing the threshold into the teaching profession. The chapter also discusses ballet training today, with insights from professional dancers from WAB and tertiary students from WAAPA. These students of the second- and third-generation are likened to the blossoms of the tree.

Kim McCarthy BA (1972–)

Central to this chapter are the experiences of McCarthy, currently Coordinator of Classical Ballet at WAAPA, and Loth-Hornsley, who performed with WAB and taught with the Educational division of the company. They reflect on their ancestry, ballet training in Perth and overseas, and their professional careers as performers and teachers.

Born in WA, McCarthy (Figure 46) lived most of “his conscious life around Mosman Park and Fremantle” (interview, December 8, 2015). His father is English but came to Australia in the 1950s as an orphan and was fostered by an English couple. His mother is Australian, born in Kalgoorlie; his maternal grandmother was English. McCarthy says he was never inspired to dance; he wanted to be an actor (interview, December 8, 2015). His early experiences were at an acting club after which he auditioned for the acting course at John Curtin Senior High School: “There was an acting audition which included improvisation, you had to sing a song and add movement” (interview, December 8, 2015). He passed that audition with three others and was asked if he was doing the dance audition. “Yes”, he replied—he thought it was part of the acting audition. At the girls’ gym, “I stood looking at all the girls in the room who were in leotards and pink tights. We had to do a barre and of course I had no idea what I was doing” (interview, December 8, 2015). However, he was accepted into the dance course. He had
done some ballroom dancing and enjoyed sports, as his father was a physical education teacher. He did “not want to dance as only girls do it” (interview, December 8, 2015). His mother’s advice was to do it for a year: “you can change to the acting course” (interview, December 8, 2015). With a wry smile, he admitted that he is still waiting. His one experience as an actor was to perform in Albert Facey’s A Fortunate Life, produced in Perth in the early 1980s. McCarthy continued his training at the Graduate College of Dance until he received a scholarship to the Hamburg Ballett Schule under the direction of John Neumeier.

McCarthy’s professional career was with Hamburg Ballet, National Dance Company of Spain and WAB. He now stages the work of Nacho Duato internationally and has been in his present position at WAAPA since 2007, where he uses his own experiences as a student to enhance his teaching practice. Before this appointment, McCarthy’s experience of teaching had been nominal; his first attempt was a professional class at WAB. At WAAPA, he is in charge of all the Diploma students, focusing mainly on the final-year students.

In Perth, his secondary training began at John Curtin College of the Arts with extracurricular studies in the Cecchetti system. He was the first male in Perth to take the examinations for 10 years and passed his Advanced examination with Honours in 1987. What he liked about the system was its certain ‘dancey’ quality. “I liked the feeling of the movement, I was that type of dancer” (interview, December 8, 2015). At 16, while still at the John Curtin College, he began studying the Besobrasova system at the Graduate College of Dance; he did not like that system, as the movements were too ‘effeminate’ and there were not enough big jumps (interview, December 8, 2015).

His time in Germany with Anatoly Nisnevitch was the pinnacle of his student years. He describes Nisnevitch as a demanding teacher and that he struggled greatly with him, “as he held the bar very high, teaching mind over matter” (interview, December 8, 2015). He hated that sort of approach but admits he does the same in his classes in Perth (interview, December 8, 2015). He states that the anatomy he studied in Perth helps him make effective corrections: “I can see why a movement is not working” (interview, December 8, 2015). Musicality is the other element that he strives to instil in his students, asserting that “musicality informs the muscles” (interview, December 8, 2015).

His experiences with two different pianists explain the different approaches taken by musicians. A Cuban pianist with whom he worked understood that the musical sense informed the muscles, so he improvised to achieve the correct support for the combination of
movement. McCarthy elaborates further to say that his regular accompanist uses ‘known’ music but “he realises the right character, timbre, and sound to get the right dynamic” (interview, December 8, 2015). He also likes to use different musical rhythms in class and gives credit to the pianist in his ability to provide ‘habaneras’ and the like (interview, December 8, 2015). His views on class structure are also made clear when he suggests that after a barre and centre practice, “it makes sense to begin jumps from two feet to two and from two feet to one before proceeding to grand allegro steps” (interview, December 8, 2015). His inquiring mind is always on the lookout for new approaches for the betterment of his students. He expresses his vision of excellence for graduates from WAAPA:

I would be happy for our students to succeed in companies like Sydney Dance [Company] and Australian Dance Theatre, and occasionally they get into ballet companies. I have always wanted everyone to come out with a phenomenal technique and have a wonderful ability to dance. (McCarthy, interview, December 8, 2015)

Jennifer Loth-Hornsley (1987–)

Jennifer Loth-Hornsley (Figure 47) discloses her family background, her early education at a Steiner School, her dance experiences in Perth, her adventures overseas, and further experiences on returning to Australia. Born in Kalgoorlie, she lived in Perth from an early age. Her mother was born in Kenya of English parents and came to Australia at the age of six. Her father is second- or third-generation Australian with German and English ancestry:

I am probably more English than German, as I have linked in with my mum’s English family…. I am a little bit prim and proper for my generation, that maybe a little taste of my English heritage. I do not know anything about my German background. (interview, January 12, 2016)

The inspiration to dance came from her love of music:

I have always loved music, and from a young age even before I started dancing and at school I used to have a great imagination. As my teacher would be telling stories, I used to close my eyes and move my hands around to the story as if I was making the movement of birds, or at least that is what my teacher told me. (interview, January 12, 2016)
She began learning jazz and tap but was captivated by the ballet piece in the programme for the dance school concert. She put aside jazz and tap and took up ballet with her first teacher, Mandy Basson: “she was inspirational and she was English, she was musical and she instilled this love of dance” (interview, January 12, 2016).

After four years at the Graduate College of Dance, Loth-Hornsley began studying RAD. Her extracurricular activities were achieved by working on Sundays, with “a floor barre done at Diana’s [de Vos’] home and then classes at another studio” (interview, January 12, 2016). She believes she progressed through her RAD examination work quickly because of the foundations established in the study of the Vaganova method (interview, January 12, 2016).

Her reference to the reverence at the beginning and end of class indicating a respect for teacher and pianist confirms her belief that the repetition of the movement helped with épaulement and port de bras, simultaneously instructing students on the etiquette required in class. Loth-Hornsley was taught anatomy in years 8 and 9 with the terms used in the ballet class:

we also worked with imagery, it is amazing what that can do. Floor work, Pilates and Yoga with its use of breath and the development of strength occurring through the physical effort of holding the poses were beneficial as were the periods spent on strengthening the metatarsals by using the TheraBand. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Loth-Hornsley loves music and in her time at the Graduate College of Dance was lucky enough to have ‘live’ pianists “because the teachers could ask for different rhythms and they didn’t have to fiddle around with the CDs” (interview, January 12, 2016). When asked about the choice of time signatures used for the Vaganova classes: “I want to say 2/4, definitely square, especially at the younger level” (interview, January 12, 2016). She also had an opinion on the counting of music:

counting is very important because the way one hears the music can be different from the other person. It has a way that unifies where one is in the music; some people listen to the musical sounds others count and I am in the middle of that spectrum. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Loth-Hornsley describes the emotional side of her experience in year 12:

I think I worked as hard as I could and all my teachers did push me. I think weighing everything up…. life and puberty, this year was the most challenging. It was the unknown of next year. Where am I going? What am I going to do? Am I good enough? It was dealing with the emotional side as well as the physical. (interview, January 12, 2016)
Loth-Hornsley worried about her future, scared about what it would hold: “I didn’t know what schools I would get into and I didn’t know if my body would hold up” (interview, January 12, 2016). She was not accepted by The New Zealand School of Dance, but she continued her training in Perth and was awarded the RAD Solo Seal. At 18, after her secondary academic and dancing education at The Graduate College of Dance and a short time at WAAPA, she was chosen to go to the English National School in London on a scholarship. Though it was an eye-opener—a big city, with “five-pound tickets to any Royal Ballet performance” (interview, January 12, 2016)—it was almost a step backwards because the emphasis was on classical: “I missed contemporary and the other side of expressing myself. All the other dancers had incredible facility and it was hard for me to be there with my body” (interview, January 12, 2016). No less a personage than Anthony Dowell, former Artistic Director of Britain’s Royal Ballet, remarked, “Your artistry is of the most amazing ballerinas I have ever seen, it is such a shame,” as her feet do not have the highly arched shape required by most artistic directors (Loth-Hornsley, interview, January 12, 2016).

She returned to Perth, and was accepted into WAAPA in second year, where she started slowly and peaked at the end of third year. By this stage, her performance experience was considerable, having danced in performances at the Graduate College of Dance, Perth City Ballet, and at WAAPA. She was fortunate to be selected for a Young Artists contract with WAB under Artistic Director Ivan Cavallari. She was given the role of the Countess in the production of The Sleeping Beauty directed by Marcia Haydee and Cavallari. “My interpretation of the role actually came from me and the directors liked what I did; the nuances that I brought to that tiny little solo were based on learning it off the video” (interview, January 12, 2016). Her later involvement with WAB enabled her to take workshops and classes in regional communities, assisting with their educational programme.

McCarthy and Loth-Hornsley had similar ancestral backgrounds, but their schooling experiences differed. They were taught by second-generation teachers, with Loth-Hornsley leaning strongly to her English heritage, while McCarthy claims to be influenced by his European connections. Before leaving Perth, both were taught by practitioners in the styles of the Italian, Russian, and English schools. They were fortunate to experience the improving standards in Perth, as this training gave them the foundation skills to go overseas and finish their studies. They brought their own vital experiences back to Perth.
Early experiences of professional ballet dancers of Perth

The professional dancers who participated in focus group 2 are principals at WAB, Jayne Cooper-Smeulders and Brooke Widdison-Jacobs, soloist Sarah Sutcliffe-Hepburn and corps de ballet members, Victoria Maughan, Yi Li Law, Carina Roberts, and Liam Green. With the exception of Law, who was born in Malaysia, and Maughan, who was born in England, all are from WA. Law is of Chinese extraction; Green’s mother was born in Latvia of Dutch ancestry; Roberts’ parents are from Canberra and Adelaide, but she mentioned that there is a Chinese connection in her father’s family; and Widdison-Jacobs family tree boasts a link with Malaysia. All have strong links with England (focus group 2, April 20, 2016).

Their first interest in dance began at a young age, prompted by mothers taking them to ballet classes because of their inclination to dance to music. Maughan says she always loved to move: “Nana loved to watch me make concerts for her; she would sit with a glass of sherry and watch me dance, something I always liked” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). Law and Green tagged on with their older sisters to ballet classes where Green was one of possibly three other males in his school. As Smeulders’ parents were both ballroom dancers, it was natural for her to follow in her sister’s footsteps at the schools of Norma Atkinson and Jodie Marshall. Roberts’ parents were both professional dancers with WAB and because she used to dance to the Wiggles music, they felt it would be a good thing for her to be involved in dance. Ballet had been a good thing in their lives (focus group 2, April 20, 2016).

A podiatrist suggested that Hepburn take up ballet because of the fallen arches in her feet. In the latter stages of her training, her family was against her continuing with ballet. Her mother told her she had to pay for her training herself and insisted that she finish year 12. Conversely, Jacobs just “fell in love,” as she had the support of her mother who loved to dance but had not been given the opportunity to study herself (focus group 2, April 20, 2016).

Their dance training experiences were all quite similar in that they went to private ballet schools with teaching methods affiliated with the English style. Hepburn, Maughan, and Law all began with the RAD at the school of June Stevens. There, Hepburn worked with several teachers including Stevens, Wardman, Susanne Arrigo, Leslie Hutchinson, and Diana de Vos. She continued into the Vocational grades because it was the hard work—you put something in and you got something out of it. I like the feeling of accomplishing something, it was a great feeling and it kept me going—that and a thirst for knowledge of the classical technique. (focus group 2, April 20, 2016)
Maughan began at Dancemania with Basson, whom she loved, and later with Michelle Fourdry and Eleanor Hay; Law began at L’Académie Étoile under the direction of Samantha Leeman.

Professional dancers’ local and overseas training experience

Smeulders’ account of her overseas training at a European finishing school in 1993 begins this section. She acknowledges the part played by her parents in helping her get to Germany. Smeulders left Australia because at that time WAAPA was not what she wanted. She went straight into the Hamburg Ballett Schule where they taught an international curriculum with an international reputation of success. Smeulders was accepted halfway through year 7. Her year 8 teacher, Frau Kruse, taught the Danish style of classical training: “it has fast footwork, we did things a lot quicker than I had done previously” (Smeulders, focus group 2, April 20, 2016). She reveals that everyone said her energy was amazing, “but my arms were not good and of course there was the issue of my bow legs” (Smeulders, focus group 2, April 20, 2016).

Smeulders, Green, and Roberts began with the CSTD. They received their tuition from Meade and Marie Gangemi, learning jazz and tap as well as ballet. Later, all went on to learn the RAD system with Barbara Thomas, Susanne Arrigo, and Meade. Jacobs was the only one who studied the Cecchetti method alongside RAD method under the tuition of Beth James. At 15, she went to the Christine Walsh Centre and the Australian Ballet School both in Melbourne. Smeulders, Hepburn, Green, and Roberts have all achieved the Solo Seal awarded by the RAD. Smeulders studied the Vaganova system at the Graduate College of Dance while continuing with preparation for the Solo Seal. Hepburn, Green, and Roberts studied at WAAPA while simultaneously studying for that final award. Green added that he began in the full-time programme at the Graduate College of Dance, “the same programme that Jayne did” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016), and continued both CSTD and RAD while doing his academic studies at Perth Modern School. Roberts completed her schooling up to year 12: “I think it is part of my personality being a bit of a high achiever” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). Hepburn enjoyed her early training at Stevens Academy of Classical Ballet, but “I am not sure whether or not it was because I was the only one in the class until I did my Solo Seal where there were three students and only two passed” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). She is sad about the reduction in the Solo Seal award material for when she and Smeulders performed and gained the award, the work examined had so much more material
for candidates to master and to demonstrate their ability, both technically and artistically. In their time, the female syllabus for the Solo Seal consisted of the Genée Port de Bras, the Karsavina Adage, a choice between two variations, one classical and the other demi-caractère, choreographed by Sir Frederick Ashton. Included in the four Finales were different types of pirouettes and batterie; a sequence of 16 *Fouettés Ronds de Jambe en tournant* and a *Grand Allegro Enchaînement* with *Grand Jetés en tournant en manège*. “Now I feel any one can pass this exam” (Hepburn, focus group 2, April 20, 2016).

Four out of seven professional dancers in the focus group finished their training at WAAPA before joining WAB. Maughan says that teachers were “picking me up on things, pinpointing things which I found was good for me but really hard so the day at WAAPA is especially hard” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). Green confirms this but adds “that the teachers in the WAAPA environment were all professional dancers and had the experience and knew what was needed in a company. That experience and that knowledge benefitted me more than the previous 10 years” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). Roberts continues: “My first year there with you, Diana—going back to basics, posture and turn-out because my previous training was so focused on dancing and moving and doing hard tricks. It was a rude shock but I loved it” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). Hepburn details the hurdles she had to overcome, with her rounded shoulders and “my rolling ankles which affected my placement right up to my hips” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016), causing problems for the necessary use of turn-out. Hepburn remembers the long hours at WAAPA and working three jobs to pay her way. “We swapped from Marilyn Jones to Margaret Illmann, a different style and totally different way of looking at the school” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016). Another point brought up by Hepburn was “when receiving reports some of the teachers would say that everything was good, nothing to work on. I would go back to them and say, if everything is good why is my mark not 100%?” (focus group 2, April 20, 2016)

Two other issues were explored. How was the musical accompaniment helpful and were the male dancers plentiful? In the later stages of their training, all agreed that the pianists were excellent. They loved having different pieces of music; some pianists were better than others, as were some teachers. As for the men in dance, it was at WAAPA where these young ladies had their first encounters with them.

Samuel Maxted’s experiences at WAAPA began in 2009. After arriving from Canberra, he began his ballet training at the age of 17, a later date than most. In three years, he achieved an Advanced Diploma and the RAD Solo Seal; later, he studied for a Bachelor of Arts degree in
Dance. The subject of his BA thesis was *The Australian Male: Why Dance?* Maxted (2011) broaches the subject of the public’s perception of males in dance as follows:

> Within our current political, economic and social systems the encouragement of males to the profession could conceivably strengthen credibility and generate greater financial support for dance. On the other hand, ignoring important and sensitive issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, homophobic attitudes and harassment is not only thoughtless and short-sighted but destroys vast and profound opportunities to educate a highly confused and conservative culture about sexuality and discrimination. (p. 7)

Maxted (personal communication, January 1, 2016) speaks frankly and with considerable understanding of the modern Australian male’s perspective of life in the dance world. He spoke about his early dancing years as a teenager in Canberra and until recently in Perth. Professional male dancers interviewed by Maxted (2011) spoke of the lack of knowledge among the general public, seeing remarks such as “they think dancing is only part time or a hobby” (p. 22) or “it is people’s general lack of understanding of the dance industry and what being a professional ballet dancer means” (p. 22) as part of the problem of attracting males to the profession.

Information provided by interviews and the literature makes it clear that considerable development occurred in the teaching profession over this time. Observations by interviewed participants about the systems of training in Perth offer insight into the different approaches available, highlighting how far the profession has developed over the years. Now students have a varied and stimulating training, encompassing other genres of dance, which adds to the classical training. The development at a tertiary level further improves the standard in Perth. National auditions are held yearly, selecting students for the three-year course at WAAPA (2015). The dance department has a training programme based on international and proven methods delivered by qualified teachers with professional dance experience. Several world-class studios and easily accessible health experts ensure that all student concerns are catered for. Opportunities are available for exchange secondments with overseas universities as well as chances to work with local and international choreographers (WAAPA, 2015). These options were not available for earlier generations of students.

The present research explores how the cycle continues from generation to generation, helping the teaching profession to appreciate the roots of our traditions while building and growing through new knowledge, support, and perseverance.
Perceptions of tertiary level students in Perth

The young students, taking part in focus group 1, were in the Diploma Course at WAAPA. Some were in their second year, while others were in their graduating year. The participants were three males (Noah Beck, William Halton, and Aaron Carey-Burrows), and nine females (Karen Haruta, Sarah Hawkins, Valentina Markovinovic, Ellen Williams, Lily King, Bridget Flint, Evelyn Roberts, Kristen Barwick, and Elena Salerno). Seven of the students were born in Perth and one in Canberra, four others were born in other Australian cities and have come to Perth to study dance at a tertiary level. The parents of four participants were born in Europe (Spain, Italy and Croatia) while two others are of Chinese and Japanese extraction. Most of the female students began at an early age, from two and half to four years. Two of the males began in their early teens while the other began at the age of 10. Beck explained:

I guess for me, I grew up in a fairly different household and family. I spent a lot of time sitting on my own, so when I started to dance it was like a safe haven for me, I found it was a bit of a calling and it went on. (focus group 1, February 18, 2016)

Beck stated that he studied the Vaganova system at the Charlesworth Ballet Centre and later at L’École Classique de Princess Grace in Monte Carlo:

many of the students went there to finish off their training and later came back to work at the Charlesworth Ballet Centre…. it was taught through a book. So, we have a certain book of exercises that we will do three or four weeks at a time in a ballet class but it gets altered now and again and each year we will do those same exercises. It was forced turn-out and flat heads but it has been changed gradually as younger teachers are coming in and modifying the course. (focus group 1, February 18, 2016)

Three of the students came from John Curtin College of the Arts and worked on that school’s own programme based on Vaganova and RAD (Atkinson, interview, December 11, 2015). Another had been taught the Cecchetti system; four had completed their RAD examinations and passed their CSTD examinations. Roberts expands: “I did CSTD jazz, tap, and ballet and RAD ballet at the same time. The terminology is all the same but CSTD is very theatrical.” She was unable to explain the use of the word theatrical but agreed that it was ‘showy’. She explained that RAD is more “technical, whereas with the CSTD it doesn’t really matter” (Roberts, focus group 1, February 18, 2016). Williams trained with the Australian Teachers of Dance, a system that is not taught in WA. She did RAD but “found that the ATD was so much more relaxed” (Williams, focus group 1, February 18, 2016).

The consensus was that the RAD has higher expectations and is more technically demanding (focus group 1, February 18, 2016). The Cecchetti system is seen to have greater emphasis on
performance ability, which relates to the founder of the system, Enrico Cecchetti, and “his desires about the movement and stuff” (Salerno, focus group 1, February 18, 2016). Roberts was very definite in her opinion that everyone passes and does well in CSTD examinations: “I have found RAD marking in exams a lot harder and more attentive to detail. CSTD is not detailed” (focus group 1, February 18, 2016). This last comment was accompanied with a vehement shake of the head. Markovinovic insisted that CSTD helps with performance: “Being able to move. Sometimes when you get a classical kid they are really like proper and stiff and you put them into jazz and they loosen up. They still have the technique but they move more” (focus group 1, February 18, 2016). She felt that the expectations of the RAD were higher, giving her the motivation to attempt the RAD work.

Next the early experiences of the male students were discussed. ‘Ostracised’ was the word used to describe their feelings in primary school when they got into fights and were left to their own devices. In high school, the attitude of their peers was different, as “they realise it is an amazing abnormal super human thing” (Carey-Burrows, focus group 1, February 18, 2016). His comment elicited laughter from the group. Two of the boys began dancing at John Curtin in the certificate course. One young man felt he was coerced into participating in the course: “I did not want to do it at all, didn’t like the idea of wearing tights, didn’t understand the art at all but slowly and slowly I got involved and became interested” (Halton, focus group 1, February 18, 2016).

The discussion turned to allied theory subjects taught at WAAPA. The first subject discussed was the anatomy of the human body. The skeletal and muscular systems were taught separately and then this knowledge was utilised in ballet class. Salerno “thinks that the teachers are a lot more aware of the anatomical things in the body, they can actually pinpoint muscles and stuff. It makes a difference so you can locate it and activate it” (focus group 1, February 18, 2016).

Williams adds, “You get to know how it works and you apply your body so it is not like a fake action.” She gives an example of how to do a développé. “You need to rotate the leg in the hip socket and then lift the knee” (focus group 1, February 18, 2016).

Barwick confirms how helpful this knowledge was in her case “it was just the safety thing because I know I was working the wrong muscles and I twisted my knee a lot and really understanding the right muscles for rotation was helpful” (focus group 1, February 18, 2016).
Carey-Burrows says that he is able to speak with a physio:

and know what they are talking about. That is really helpful because I speak their language. Sometimes there is confusion because they treat you for the wrong thing but now I can say this is what is wrong, this is what I think it is and they are able to treat you properly and it has helped me a lot. (focus group 1, February 18, 2016)

A very helpful and appreciated fact is that the theoretical study of anatomy is supported by the teacher’s feedback in the ballet classroom. They all felt it is an effective method of communicating information to the students. Another concern, raised by Roberts, was the management of injuries who related her experience during the 2015 final performance:

when I injured myself during performance week I was blamed for not telling them that it was that bad. But at the same time, it was kind of a two-way street, they should have noticed that I was really struggling. I wasn’t doing class and was crying through class. I did have a lot of pain and I wanted to go through it. (focus group 1, 18, February, 2016)

The level of support was much better on her return from injury, and she has “had rehab every week and occupational therapy” (focus group 1, February 18, 2016). Another situation was described and found surprising, where relevés were not allowed after an injury but jumps were: “In the relevé the shock goes through to the hips but alighting from a jump allows the action of the foot and knee to cushion or absorb the shock on landing” (Roberts, focus group 1, February 18, 2016). The consensus was that having a knowledgeable physiotherapist made a significant difference; reference was made to one practitioner with a dance background who, after a career on the stage, qualified as a therapist. It is now common practice for the attending therapist to direct appropriate information to the dance department of WAAPA and subsequently this is circulated to the staff.

Similarly, the theory of music is taught in a separate class; this is helpful to students when working with an accompanist in ballet classes. Salerno stated that being taught musical theory assists her understanding of instructions in class as she “is half deaf. Completely deaf in my left ear so I am profoundly deaf and not many people would pick it up” (focus group 1, February 18, 2016). The group discussed the benefits of having a pianist. “Gennaro improvises a lot, anything at the drop of a hat” (Salerno, focus group 1, February 18, 2016). When McCarthy asks for a four rather than a three “a 2/4 instead of 6/8 for an assemblé” (Salerno, focus group 1, February 18, 2016) it made such a difference. The difference being “the accent was down instead of up and the ballon develops with the use of the music” (Salerno, focus group 1, February 18, 2016). Further discussion revealed that the pianist—Gennaro—inspired them, because of the way “he gets right into it” (Roberts, focus group 1,
February 18, 2016). The group informed that if they are dancing to a track they have to dance to it; but if there is a pianist, he follows them. The discussion revolved around the different skills required when dancing in a corps de ballet or being a soloist. In the former, everyone needs to be together but a soloist has greater freedom and room for interpretation and “the pianist follows us” (Markovinovic, focus group 1, February 18, 2016). If the pianist keeps to the regular tempo, the dancer must stay with it, which “pushes you”. They all agreed it is nice to develop a relationship with someone who is playing. According to Salerno, “the atmosphere changes whenever I have a live percussionist or pianist or guitarist. It changes the whole mood, the feeling in your body, how you perform” (focus group 1, February 18, 2016). This brought to mind George Balanchine’s instruction “make the music visible” (Minden, 2005), emphasising that it is the synergy between dancer and musician that creates a musical dancer.

The previous chapters have revealed the marked contrast in the availability and standard of teaching since the early decades of this investigation into the development of classical ballet technique and its teaching in Perth. Current students do realise and appreciate that their early training has enabled them to access a professional course that has high demands. At this tertiary level they are supported by experts in the artistic and scientific fields of endeavour (Figure 48). There is now an established pathway to achieve their ambition to work with a professional company. These students were looking forward to completing their training and anticipating the job market with some trepidation but also with hope and courage.
This chapter drew from the third generation of the Perth ballet community. McCarthy, Smeulders, and Loth-Hornsley trained under the second-generation teachers in Perth before travelling overseas for advanced training. A younger cohort of professional dancers and students reveal evidence of further changes arising from pedagogical information from international sources that influenced the teaching profession in WA. These advances make it possible for this generation to move immediately into the professional arena.

The strong connections with England that once existed seem less distinct, as professional dancers and tertiary students varied in their personal backgrounds and training. The young WAB dancers and WAAPA students provide insight into the modern-day ballet training experience in Perth; most of them trained under second- and third-generation teachers. Their early training was predominantly through the RAD, CSTD, Cecchetti, and Vaganova systems. Most of the focus group participants have had comprehensive, full-time training in Perth, with those born in the twenty-first century benefitting from the efforts of volunteer
teachers and interested parents who have assisted the RAD Regional Advisory Panel of WA and the WA committee of Cecchetti Australia. The AICD has also encouraged volunteers to organise their competition. The collaborative nature of the panels has contributed to greater interaction between teachers of the same ilk, with the added advantage that these planned events are inclusive to students of different persuasions.

Mothers in particular have continued to wield an influence on their children; without the interest of parents, many would not have the support required for this profession. The females pursued patterns set by previous generations, beginning dancing at an early age, some following conventional schooling combined with part-time ballet classes into their mid-to-late teens. Several have had the benefit of schooling in a ballet programme integrated with academic studies. The males began late, including one who had begun in his late teens.

Modern facilities and opportunities enhance the educational rigour applied at this stage in the development of dance education and performance in Perth. The return of professional dancers continues the cycle of dancer—teacher—dancer, bringing new expertise and knowledge back to Perth, further contributing to the ballet teaching community.
Conclusion

The principal question of this research concerns how the art of teaching classical ballet technique in WA has developed over a period of 66 years. To this end, data has been interpreted and evaluated to reveal outcomes aligned with the aims of the research. The significance of this project is discussed here, culminating in recommendations for future research in this field.

A combination of material from archival sources and the reminiscences of teachers has been instrumental in tracing WA’s balletic heritage. The narrative analysis of the interviews revealed the important role of the teacher and highlighted the flow of pedagogical ideas in the field of classical ballet in WA. The data collected provided information on the philosophies of dance technique, musicality, and artistry; facilities and services; educational advancements; and the acceptance of males in the profession. Also disclosed is how attitudes in the profession have changed over the generations in the wider historical context of WA.

The qualitative methodology chosen for this study allowed for variations in the recollections of members of the dance community who participated directly in this particular period of WA’s history. The favouring of an auto-ethnographical approach allowed the researcher to maintain a balance between involvement and detachment when conducting interviews and focus groups, and receiving personal communications. The figurative device of metaphor illustrated the historical connections between three generations of teachers, which has contributed to the organisation and structure of this thesis.

Our heritage

During the twentieth century in Australia, dancing was enjoyed as a pleasurable activity, with fancy dancing taught and performed as entertainment rather than an art form. The likely inducement that inspired Western Australians to enjoy the theatrical art form of classical ballet was the visit of the Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova; however, it has been argued that WA’s ballet heritage is related to England, which was regarded by many Western Australians before and after the war as their home. An English pedigree was a benchmark for cultural and artistic endeavours in this state, and it is this heritage that has been the point of departure for this narrative. The hallmark of the English school of classical ballet has been described as refined and restrained, reflecting the traditions of English society. Opponents of the style suggested that dancers trained in this style have an appearance of stiffness. In contrast, the
theatrical style of dance, also of English origin, showed a down-to-earth, energetic quality with less refinement. The former style was favoured by the middle-classes, and the latter by the working-classes. Western Australians did not all aspire to the same genre of dance.

After the war, many immigrants settled in Perth, including Europeans who challenged the status quo of ballet teaching there. They offered a different way of movement and style, possibly as a result of their ethnicity or the social standing of their families in their countries of origin. Their style was expressive, with movements conveying lyricism and vibrancy.

The first-generation of ballet teachers was influenced in their choice of teaching methods by their ethnicity. Several second-generation participants are descendants of English migrants and were trained in the English system of dance until their mid-to-late teens. On becoming members of the WAB as young adults, they experienced the European style. In recent years, community attitudes have changed, embracing the concept of multiculturalism and prompting teachers to incorporate new ideas into their practice. Most of the third generation were born in Australia; now in the ballet world little emphasis is placed on ethnicity.

**Transference of pedagogy**

The findings show that WA’s pedagogical lineage is linked to four prominent schools of ballet from Europe—Italian, French, Danish, and Russian schools, developed under the auspices of aristocratic patronage. Conversely, in England, an interest in ballet grew from humble circumstances until prominent representatives of the European schools, including Pavlova, Genée, Karsavina, Cormani, and Espinosa, settled there. They continued to foster their art for English teachers, encouraging the growth of what is now known as the English school of ballet. This demonstrates how the different characteristics of each school stem from their ethnographical history and culture and how the representatives of these schools contributed to the expansion, understanding, and refinement of balletic pedagogy in Perth.

This initiative began with Wilson, whose English dance teaching qualifications enabled her to establish the first professional school in Perth. In an attempt to foster this pedigree, her classes were expensive. Wilson was crucial to the growth of this field; she introduced the first English ballet organisation in Perth, the RAD, which encouraged Stacy to follow a similar path. Fleming also trained in the RAD system, but preferred to teach the less inhibited Greek dancing style in the older, well-established western suburbs. The Cecchetti method, though of Italian origin, was codified by the ISTD and taught by Bousloff and Sobkowiak-Ferris. The European teachers taught ballet with zest and vigour, preferring the Cecchetti system for its
emphasis on the delivery of movement and performance quality. The CSTD was used by
teachers of jazz, tap, and ballet in Perth’s northern working-class suburbs. There is evidence
to suggest that teachers were attracted to a particular system because of their ancestral
connections with England, until a wave of post war immigrants changed the status quo.

The second generation of the English lineage continued to teach the same syllabi as their
predecessors. Those of the European lineage either stayed with the Cecchetti system or
changed to Borovansky or Vaganova, depending on whether they intended to teach ballet as a
recreational activity or to strive for a professional standard.

After studying in England, Charlesworth and Aldous brought the theories of Audrey de Vos
to Perth; their empirical evidence, now endorsed by advanced educational methods,
exemplifies how information has been disseminated over time and continents. Charlesworth
continued the search for more effective dance training methods, beginning with Besobrasova
and later recommending the Vaganova system, possibly because it continued the principles of
the Imperial Russian school. While not articulated clearly in the data, Charlesworth and her
staff may have switched to the Vaganova system because it was a structured eight-year
programme with a basic technical vocabulary and a focus on expression made visible through
the whole body. Unlike the other systems, it was not a set examination syllabus.

The pedagogic information from master teachers of the new wave significantly developed the
profession, requiring an in-depth understanding of human anatomy and musical theory. The
expectations of 20th century choreographers and their demands from exponents of the
classical ballet technique. Now in the 21st century a greater sense of freedom and a higher
level of virtuosic movement is prevalent. This development has also encouraged changes in
teaching methods. Further progress has been made through the mandatory call for continuing
professional development, with societies presenting teachers’ courses at undergraduate level.
It is deemed necessary to study vocabulary relevant to a particular society with knowledge of
anatomy and music to support the technical foundations. Artistry is encouraged through
expressive movement in response to music. Other revelations confirmed that there is little or
no stigma attached to the study of theatrical dance, as a combination of both styles can
produce well-rounded dancers. The Perth dance community has moved from an amateur
mindset to a professional one.
Resources, facilities, and services

Research data reveals that in the early years conditions were not always of the professional standard that they are today. Unsuitable spaces were sometimes used for dance practice, possibly caused by a lack of financial backing and little knowledge of safe dance issues. Other observations have been made suggesting that not all first-generation teachers had a sound knowledge of anatomy, and auditions were not held for classical ballet programmes. Music was important to all, though each had different purposes—Wilson employed high-calibre musicians of classical music for her professional students. Stacy preferred flowing melodies and popular rhythms to encourage her students. Fleming used more contemporary theories, allowing her pianists to improvise with music supporting the dynamics of movement. Pianists accompanied Bousloff’s classes, where she encouraged musical dynamics but was not so clear in imparting theoretical musical instruction. It is not known whether the other protagonists used pianists, but it can be speculated that they did as there was no alternative, though this luxury prevented them from making an adequate income.

In her efforts to ensure that classical ballet prospered, Wilson formed a professional ballet company as employment prospects would give purpose to the study of ballet and result in a higher standard of teaching. Bousloff and her compatriots formed the WAB to showcase their talents. The findings show that Wilson did seek out Bousloff in the hope that they could combine their efforts. While it is unlikely that anyone knows the full story, this thesis has documented the first allusion to the existence of competing ambitions among the leading protagonists of the dance teaching profession.

The second–generation experienced similar difficulties in their transition from performing to teaching, though their performance ability was beneficial in the demonstration of movements. Their businesses began slowly, but they eventually moved into more suitable rented premises, providing improved facilities and services for their growing clientele. Subsequently, the study of anatomy and music was required for qualifications conferred by the relevant dance societies. In later years, this generation invested in property and developed schools with professional services. Facilities improved in major studios with ‘sprung’ floors. Examples of earlier inadequate floors contrast with the conditions provided by the second-generation teachers. Now complexes are often purpose built with studios, barres, and mirrors; also included are administration offices, storage space, and coffee shops. Six full-time private ballet schools offer secondary programmes for students with ambitions of dancing
professionally. The high rentals in the city and population growth has meant that schools are likely to be situated in the suburbs, with their students participating in the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) programme.

Safe dance practices are part of any curriculum, with floor barre seen as instrumental in improving a dancer’s posture and turn-out of the hips, for gaining flexibility and strength and for rehabilitation after injury or illness. Somatics are used in current practice to improve body awareness, achieving better health and balance. Lately, health has been a focus for all teachers, whether they conduct a private school or work in an institution. For injuries occurring in the studio, teachers are competent and have qualifications in first aid. Occupational Health and Safety requirements are high and governed by legislation. Fortunately, today information is disseminated by the IADMS, with local support from medical practitioners, physiotherapists, and councillors. It is pleasing to note that research into dance-related injuries is continuing and, interestingly, transitions of dancers to these professions are quite common.

In the early years, pianists were used by this generation, but improvements in technology afforded the use of recorded music, beginning with reel-to-reel recorders and cassettes and later compact discs. Opportunities to have pianists are limited, as they are seen as a luxury rather than a necessity. In recent years, excellent recorded music was provided by dance societies to accompany their syllabus material, but used only in class; in examinations, a pianist was mandatory, especially for the upper levels. In the 1970s and 80s, full-time schools had pianists for the principal teacher or guest teachers. The consensus of the focus group favoured interaction with a pianist, as it can be inspirational. Relationships between teachers, pianists, and students in the classroom are respectful and beneficial in the creation of a collaborative environment, especially at tertiary level. The establishment of WAAPA has been a significant development in Perth.
The participation, acceptance, and experiences of male dancers

This research has revealed that from the early to mid-twentieth century in Perth, a career in dance was not considered suitable for males or females, but the teaching of ballet was acceptable for the latter. Young men took classes at Wilson’s school and several participated in early WAB productions. The issue of young boys learning ballet was and still is an area that can improve—ballet is perceived to be a female activity, leaving males open to the risk of appearing effeminate. More importantly, participants confirm that the public does not see professional dance as a desirable occupation for males; young males are not encouraged to learn ballet because these views are still apparent. Early incidents show how discrimination at school in the form of bullying and teasing affected young boys. Their opinion was that boys generally fell into ballet accidently, or that boys learning jazz, tap, or contemporary dance were cajoled into taking up ballet. Important and sensitive issues such as these prevent young men from taking part in dance and are still prevalent to a point. Several schools endeavour to make males feel special and confident by offering boys’ classes at higher levels, providing them with opportunities to move and jump. As male dancers are now applauded for strength, bravura technique, and partnering and acting skills, and are sought after in the ballet world, the number of male teachers is slowly increasing. This is a positive development, as they act as role models for potential male students. Male teachers are considered to have more authority than their female counterparts, a suggestion made during the discussion with focus group 1. Not a great deal of support for this suggestion came from many of the students. Males are seen as elite athletes, and their involvement in the dance scene in Perth as exponents and/or teachers has taken a long time to change.

Implications and significance of the research

The implications of this research reveal that attitudes in the community have changed in Perth. For a variety of reasons, schools cater for diverse clientele, supporting the philosophy that everyone may engage in the art of ballet. Students’ interest may be for recreation or for career prospects, allowing everyone to enjoy learning this activity. Neither ethnicity nor class are dividing factors—perhaps the view of a supportive and collaborative profession is slowly coming to fruition.

It has taken the efforts of three generations of teachers to develop the art of teaching classical ballet in Perth to the standard it is today. Was it our nature that brought us into this sphere of theatricality and performance? Was it our love of music and movement that added a creative
element? Perhaps then, it was the nurturing of the teachers who developed our talents. The answers are elusive. No evidence on this issue was found to be conclusive, but it is known that the legacy of the European and English schools influenced the pedagogical methods of ballet schools and institutions.

Perhaps not all dance teachers have been acknowledged in a monetary sense, but it is clear that those participating in this research see the teaching of ballet as a vocation. Dance societies have rewarded teachers whose support for them is exemplary. Teachers from WA have been acknowledged by the President’s Award and received RAD fellowships. Several have been made Members of the Order of Australia for their services to the performing arts or received lifetime achievement awards from Ausdance.

Unfortunately, the limitations of the project made it impossible to include a larger number of community teachers. My own interviewing techniques have proved insufficient, preventing me from asking more detailed questions in certain areas such as the intricacies of pedagogical development and its reliance on musical theory. My insider knowledge made it difficult to ensure that all information came from the research interviews only. To my knowledge, a survey such as this has not been done before, as most information available highlights the role of the performer rather than that of the teacher. This new knowledge may have an impact on dance teachers, especially from the perspective of local dance history.

Further research into these areas is possible, perhaps narrowing the focus to experiences of male dancers: could education on this front be the answer to encourage more boys and adolescent males to dance? A historical survey of the performance groups would give an indication of how far this important aspect has grown. Further investigation into the historical backgrounds of other dance genres in Perth or regional centres in WA would be valuable. Finally, though the physical health of dancers has been well documented, another line of enquiry could focus on the mental health issues besetting the dance profession.

The current situation is possibly more than the first generation ever envisaged, for now Perth has competent teachers, facilities, and support systems to produce dancers with a high standard of expertise. Their expertise is evidence enough to demonstrate that considerable advances have been made through the offering of professional tuition and services.

The significance of this project lies in how the past has had an impact on the present with the unravelling of a microcosm of WA’s cultural and social history. This research, a snapshot of history in this field, highlights the role of teachers in the community and acts as a testimony
for dedication, perseverance, and continued desire for improvement—clearly showing advancement in this discipline. The balletic heritage entrusted to present teachers of ballet is the legacy for future generations who may build on the efforts of the pioneering teachers and those of the second and third generations to ensure that the art of teaching classical ballet technique continues successfully into the twenty-first century.

A final word from John Cranko (1927–1973), Director of the Stuttgart Ballet and an international choreographer:

The foundations of all great ballet companies and all important dancers are imbued during their development. In the history of ballet, the best teachers have never limited themselves to presenting only bodily discipline—at the centre of their philosophy has always stood the striving for harmony between body and emotion through awareness and development of spirit and fantasy. But the dancer can only become an artist when his highly trained body totally agrees with all he has to say.
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Appendix 1: Approval from the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee to conduct the research

From: Research Ethics
Sent: Tuesday, 3 November 2015 3:10 PM
To: dcbeck@our.ecu.edu.au; beckdevos@gmail.com
Cc: Luke HOPPER <l.hopper@ecu.edu.au>; Research Assessments <researchassessments@ecu.edu.au>; Sarah KEARN <s.kearn@ecu.edu.au>
Subject: Project 12893 BECK Ethics Approval

Dear Diana

Project Number: 12893 BECK
Project Name: The development of classical ballet in WA 1950-2015
Student Number: 10389816

The ECU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has reviewed your application and has granted ethics approval for your research project. In granting approval, the HREC has determined that the research project meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

The approval period is from 3 November 2015 till 29 December 2016.

The Research Assessments Team has been informed and they will issue formal notification of approval. Please note that the submission and approval of your research proposal is a separate process to obtaining ethics approval and that no recruitment of participants and/or data collection can commence until formal notification of both ethics approval and approval of your research proposal has been received.

All research projects are approved subject to general conditions of approval. Please see the attached document for details of these conditions, which include monitoring requirements, changes to the project and extension of ethics approval.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information.

Kind regards

Rowe Oakes
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Appendix 2: Questions used to facilitate the interviews and focus groups

1 Can you please tell me about your background?
   a) Where were you born? Have you lived in Perth all your life?
   b) What nationality are you? Are your parents Australian? Is there a part of your upbringing or nationality that you may be able to define and suggest how it may affect your development?
   c) Where did you do your early training and with whom?
   d) What inspired you to learn to dance?

2 Can you tell me a little about the teachers with whom you worked?
   a) His or her name? What was their background and did you work with them in Perth?
   b) When you were studying with them at which level were you working?
   c) Did they use a system, and if so what was it?
   d) Did they have knowledge of anatomy?
   e) Did they have knowledge of music?
   f) Were the facilities good in the studio? For example, size, floors, barres, piano &/or sound system, mirrors, curtains.
   g) Was there a pianist? Was it set music they played or did they improvise or play different dance rhythms? What about time signatures?

3 How did your teacher/s influence you? Do you remember anything about their teaching style?

4 Did you perform with any ballet company? And if so what was your performance experience?

5 For how long have you been teaching? And why did you choose this profession?
   a) Do you use a recognised system or programme? What is it?
   b) Are there benefits to using this system? Principles, vocabulary, style. Can you suggest why this system is like this?
   c) Are the facilities you have in your premises based on Health and Safety regulations?
   d) Have you a good knowledge of anatomy?
   e) Have you a good knowledge of music? How do you incorporate this into your teaching?
f) Have you a good knowledge of ballet history? Do you use this knowledge to inform your students on style?

g) How have experiences in your training and performing assisted with your teaching career?

6 Do you think ballet as an activity or even a career is more acceptable now by the general public, particularly in the case of males, and as a consequence do you see more of them taking up dance?

   a) Do you have them in the same class as the girls?
   b) Do you teach them in a different way?
   c) What do you see as essential in the teaching of the male dancer?

7 Have you seen changes in the profile of ballet teachers here?

   a) Is it a profession for young people to pursue?
   b) Do you own the business where you work?
   c) Have you involved yourself in other ways with the ballet community?

8 Do you see this profession as a “job” or do you see it as a vocation, an activity that you simply must do?

   a) Are you interested in the concept of continual personal development?
   b) What is it that makes you want to be part of this profession?

As a final question, is there anything that you would like to add?

Thank you very much for participating.
Appendix 3: Referenced personalities

Alan Alder
   Former principal dancer, former head of Dance at WAAPA
Audrey de Vos
   Prominent English dance teacher
Gennaro Di Donna
   Repetiteur at WAAPA
Keith George
   Husband of Linley Wilson
Lily Grove
   Prominent teacher of Greek dancing in England
Philippa Haesler-Davern
   Daughter of Joan Stacy
Frank Hardy
   Author of *Power Without Glory*
Leslie Hanson Hutchinson BA, ARAD
   Principal dancer with WAB
   Artistic Director, Children’s Dance Theatre, Victoria
   Lecturer at Graduate College of Dance and WAAPA
   Co-Principal of Terpsichore Dance Centre
Coral Jeffrey
   Pianist at June Stevens Academy of Classical Ballet, WAB and TDC
John Neumeier
   Artistic Director, Hamburg Ballet, Germany
Anatoly Nisnevitch
   Lecturer at Hamburg Ballett Schule, Germany
Robert Pomié
   French dancer and guest artist with WAB
Margaret Walker
   Artistic Director of Dance Concert, Sydney
Monica Wardman
   Associate Principal of June Stevens Academy of Classical Ballet
   Former RAD Examiner
Appendix 4: French terminology

Translations from Ryman (1995) and Wilson (1957)

Plié a bending of the knees
Battement tendu a stretched beating action of the leg
Battement jeté a thrown beating action
Dévelopé an unfolding action of the leg
Relevé lent a slow lift of the leg
Attitude a pose or way of holding oneself in which the working leg, usually bent, is placed either in front or behind the body
Penché a tilting action performed with the working leg extended to arabesque
Épaulement the use of the shoulder
Enchaînement a sequence of two or more steps linked together
Fouetté rond de jambe en tournant a spin initiated by a whip like action of the leg
Pas de bourée a linking step performed terre à terre consisting of three transfers of weight
Ballon resilience in jumping actions (a buoyant quality)
En travesti term applied to a female dancer dressed as a man
Révérence a respectful movement performed generally at the end of class