

RAISING THE BARRE

The Art of Programming a Season

With Susan Jaffe



Inspiration

- READ! From fiction to historical novels to poetry, prose can be moving.
- Get out and see inspiring art - take a walk to museums, go to concerts, etc.
- Get familiar with all dance forms to see where intersections with classical dance are possible.



Engagement

- Talk to as many other artistic directors as possible. Share your experiences. Ask questions.
- Connect with emerging choreographers. Go see their work and start a dialogue.
 - » “What interests you?”
 - » “What is something you are working on, or thinking about?”
- “Market” your new programming/commissions to audiences and donors to increase their understanding of what you are presenting.
- Where possible, go where the work is, whether it’s a competition like Prix de Lausanne, or a student choreographic show.



Production

- Have a deep understanding of the company’s repertoire, including anniversaries of works and the last time these works were performed.
- Consider different ratios on commissions. How many new works can be commissioned each season compared to repertoire pieces?
- When possible, tour. It is an excellent way to get a sense of new theaters, communities, audiences.
- Know your spaces. Not all works will work for every stage.



Creation or Incubation of New Full Length Works

- Understand the fiscal reality of today’s environment; compressed rehearsal time-down from months to weeks.
- Collaborate - especially with European companies who may be able to produce costumes on a different financial scale.
- Use second or studio companies as incubators to workshop longer narrative ballets.
- Consider using a dramaturg who understands dance and choreographers.
- Adapt full length work to smaller theaters appropriate for touring.