

New York Branch – Survey of preferences regarding a new venue

Responses to the survey were received from 9 to 15 July 2019. Altogether 37 dancers responded.

1. What location(s) work for you? Please choose one option per line.

Location	Preferred	Neutral	Not preferred but doable	Will not work for me at all
Upper West Side	9	6	15	4
Upper East Side	6	12	15	3
Midtown West	24	7	4	0
Midtown East	19	6	6	2
Downtown	12	13	7	2
Brooklyn (Williamsburg area)	2	0	11	20
Queens (Long Island City area)	5	3	11	15

The above responses indicate that Midtown West would be doable for every dancer who responded to the survey; that is, no-one said it does not work for them at all. Midtown West also received the most 'Preferred' votes – 24 out of a possible 37.

Midtown East and Downtown appear to be the next most preferred locations, in that order. The lack of enthusiasm for the Upper East or Upper West sides could be due in part to the difficulty in parking at any time of day.

Note: It can be seen that the rows do not add up to exactly 37. This is because not all respondents completed every row.

Optional comments were as follows:

- *I haven't been dancing at the branch since the move to St Barts - takes 1.5 hrs by bus/subway from NJ in early evening traffic. Would consider re-joining if reachable from Port Authority bus terminal, or Penn Station, in 15 mins or less by foot or subway.*
- *When I say "Doable", I mean it is doable, but I may switch to the Monday group out of convenience. (We live in Washington Heights, so Queens and Brooklyn are a bit of a stretch for us.)*
- *Would prefer to start and end earlier if we go to Brooklyn.*
- *Proximity to public transportation is a requirement so we should consider that in any area. While Bklyn and Qns could be less expensive, the locations would not meet our requirements for a more central location with good public transportation.*
- *Selections reflect the practical issues of traffic and parking since I am coming in from New Jersey.*
- *I said doable for UWS and UES, but going high up quickly stops being doable.*

2. What start time(s) do you prefer? Please choose one option per line.

Time	Preferred	Neutral	Not preferred but doable	Will not work for me at all
6 pm	3	2	10	19
6.30 pm	4	6	12	11
7 pm	18	10	7	0
7.30 pm	22	10	1	0

The responses to question 2 suggest that the preferred option would be to keep to the current starting time of 7.30pm. Beginning at 7pm would also be doable for everyone, while starting any earlier would not work for many dancers.

Optional comments:

- *These are dependent on where it is (of course).*
- *These times would be alright for me. A few people seemed to prefer the 7pm or later to fit their work schedule. NY Branch has always started the classes at 7:30pm (it tradition counts for anything)*
- *Again, traffic and parking are the constraints.*
- *There's no time for us to come home, eat, and get to dancing before 7pm at earliest.*
- *The earlier, the worse the traffic into NYC from NJ*

3. Please check up to THREE of your top priorities in a dance class space (besides location [addressed in question 1] and a decent dance floor [taken as a given]):

Priority	Number of times chosen
Public transit nearby	30
Air conditioning	26
Ability to drink tea/eat snacks in the room	8
Pleasant bathroom(s)	7
Seating for during the break	7
Street parking nearby	6
Community" feel (i.e., not a formal dance studio)	6
Other – “well-lit and spacious”	1
Not too many stairs	0

Optional comments:

- *a subway stop is by far the most important consideration*
- *I almost checked AC, but AC is a seasonal issue, so other priorities are more important year-round. Bathrooms are a must. Pleasant would be preferable, but I can deal with less-than-pleasant (this is NYC after all) if it checks all the other boxes. Ftr, I'm fine with a formal dance studio.*
- *The checked items are my top priorities. Pleasant bathrooms = CLEAN. Desired amenities include tea break (for community) and air conditioning. Not too many stairs would be good to have but is not necessarily a priority. Street [parking] is a bonus but NYC is really a pedestrian town and most people will need the public option.*

- *High-ceiling, well-lit, spacious. The few times I danced at St Bart's, I found it dark, crowded, and the pillars very intrusive. Formal dance studio okay, actually - but almost certainly too expensive!*
- 4. The Branch has historically held two classes (basic and experienced) in separate rooms for the first hour, while other area dance groups (e.g., Scotia, Ho-Ho-Kus) have one room all evening, typically with a class geared toward beginners for the first hour. How important to you is it that we continue to have separate rooms for the first hour of classes?**

Response	Number of times chosen
I would stop attending if there was only one room for the first hour	1
I prefer separate rooms for the first hour, but would continue to attend if there was only one	31
I prefer just one room all evening	2
Total	34

Optional comments:

- *We are an official branch of The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. As such our "mission" is educational - "to provide for the teaching and practice of Scottish country dancing" We should strive to have at least two rooms; we are established with separate classes (basic and experienced).*

- *I would not stop coming, but a basic class is extremely important for the NY Branch.*

- *I dance at Scotia & Ho-Ho-kus, beginners first hour, which seems to me to work well. At Scotia the first dance after the break is okay for them, which gives them a chance to meet the rest of us (and us a chance to let any super-promising beginners stay longer).*

5. Currently the duration of classes is two and a half hours. In case only one room is available at a venue that seems suitable in other respects, one option might be to rent the facility for up to four hours, beginning at 6 or 6.30pm. The first hour or hour and a half would be dedicated to the basic dancers, and the later part would be for more experienced dancers. Would this be acceptable for you? Please use the comment box to add any thoughts you have on how this might work, or why it would not work for you.

Response	Number of times chosen
If evenings are organized this way, it is fine with me	33
This would not work for me for the reasons given below	2
Total	35

Optional comments.

- *If we did this, it'd be nice to have the social hour between the two classes so that they could dance with each other.*
- *This is just incoherent nonsense. Since a major concern is cost, we might negotiate a two tier rental structure - one room for 1.5 hours and the second room for the full 2.5 hours. Depending on location, our "landlord" could find this acceptable if they employ staff for setup, etc. Will only know once in negotiation.*
- *Given my work hours, I need to leave fairly early, so this is not a preferred option.*

- *I think it is important that beginners are instructed not only in the dance and its arrangement, but some time should be spent on technique. At the beginning, I think a video presentation should be shown as "this is what we are aspiring to do," and emphasis s/be placed on eliminating bad habits from the start, i.e. flapping arms, street shoes, which are easy to eliminate in the beginning but harder later on. Also only volunteers should be assigned to dance w/beginners. Some of us do not have the patience/inclination at times.*
- *Leaving work that early is difficult.*
- *This might work for me, but I think it depends on implementation.*
- *I rarely can stay past the break.*
- *If I'm teaching the basic class, I will have a problem if it begins before 7, as I can't guarantee I could get there in time. That obviously depends on location and parking.*
- *If we can find an appropriate location that is affordable with this arrangement. And if the teachers are ok with this timing.*

6. EXPERIENCED CLASS: We will likely need to raise class rates to meet rising rents. Currently the rates for the experienced class are \$10 for RSCDS members and \$12 for non-members, and a 10-class dance card is \$85. What is the most you would pay without it adversely affecting your attendance? Please choose one of the following:

Response	Number of times chosen
I could/would not pay more than the current rate	0
My maximum would \$12 member, \$15 non-member, and \$100 card	11
My maximum would \$15 member, \$18 non-member, and \$125 card	16
My maximum would \$18 member, \$20 non-member, and \$150 card	6
Some other rate or combination. Please explain in the comment box	2
Total	35

Optional comments:

- *I personally would probably be willing to pay \$15, but I think \$18 is too high for those who happen not to be members (i.e., at that rate we would probably lose some dancers). Some dance communities have experimented with sliding scale and consider it successful. I think CDSS would be a resource for that information.*
- *This [increase to \$12] would not be a hardship for the majority of our dancers and it would boost the bottom line. We should also work to improve attendance. I also think we should charge a flat rate for party nights (i.e., card good for classes) and I think \$12 - only \$2 more for card holders and \$3 savings for non-members.*
- *I guess I don't have a hard limit, but as the prices goes up I expect I'd get pickier about the program, the weather, how I was feeling that day, etc.*
- *I would be willing to hear what is needed.*
- *It costs what it costs...*

- 7. BASIC CLASS: We will likely need to raise class rates to meet rising rents. Currently the basic class series rate is \$50 for 9 classes plus the end-of-series party. What is the maximum you would be willing to pay for a basic class series? If the answer would depend on whether you are taking your first series or you are returning, please explain in the space for comments.**

Response	Number of times chosen
I could/would not pay more than the current rate	0
My maximum would \$65	1
My maximum would \$75	2
My maximum would \$90	2
Some other rate or combination. Please explain in the comment box	0
This question does not apply to me	21
Total	26

Optional comments:

- *Although not a new dancer, I think we should raise the rate for a series of basic classes*
- *\$10 per class for 9 classes is more than fair.*
- *Personally, I think we have been offering a VERY steep discount for the beginner classes. I suspect beginners would be willing to pay more. After all, it's not common to get an evening of dance teaching for under \$20 for other styles.*

- 8. Please feel free to expand on any of your previous answers or offer any additional comments or venue suggestions here:**

- *Would just like to express appreciation for the work of the people who are doing the heavy lifting on this project. I know it isn't easy!*
- *Since wooden floor spaces are generally found in old places of worship, perhaps we should look at where they are located.*
- *Good luck!*
- *This is Ken and Debbie Saunders. Our strong preference for a west mid-town venue is because we bus to the city from NJ any other venue makes the evening too long to consider.*
- *Thank you for putting time into this.*