



Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary and Modern Dance Companies

OCTOBER 2021

This Report expands the scope of Dance Data Project®'s research to examine, for the first time, the largest U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies. Past research by Dance Data Project® (DDP) has examined various aspects of the dance industry with a lens of gender equity, including leadership and programming at the largest ballet companies, dance festivals, venues presenting dance, and more. This is DDP's first study which explicitly looks at contemporary and modern dance companies.

The Report finds that the Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies operated with aggregate expenses of about \$150 million in fiscal year 2019. For context, in the same year, the Largest 50 U.S. ballet companies operated with aggregate expenses of about \$664 million, showing an extreme disparity in available resources.

The Report also shows the even gender distribution of current Artistic Directors at the Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies (50% women and 50% men), as well as the gender distribution of company founders (54% women and 46% men), and the average age of companies (37 years).

Due to the subjective nature of categorizing dance companies by genre, there are several companies which DDP has chosen to include in this Report which were also included in DDP's previous research on ballet companies. These companies are Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, L.A. Dance Project, and PHILADANCO!. For further details, see "Adjusted Expenditures" in Section III.

The Report contains the following sections:

- I. Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary and Modern Dance Companies
- II. Scope of the Industry
- III. Comparison to Ballet
- IV. Founding Dates and Artistic Directors
- V. Methodology, Limitations, and Notes

APPENDIX: Largest 50 and Next 50 U.S. Ballet Companies

Section I: Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary and Modern Dance Companies

The following contemporary and modern dance companies are ordered by size of annual expenses. For this listing, annual expenses refer to fiscal year 2019, the most recent year for which data was consistently available.¹

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater | 26. TU Dance |
| 2. Mark Morris Dance Group | 27. Garth Fagan Dance |
| 3. Paul Taylor Dance Company | 28. BANDALOOP |
| 4. Gibney Company | 29. Limón Dance Company |
| 5. Hubbard Street Dance Chicago | 30. Stephen Petronio Company |
| 6. The Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company | 31. Minnesota Dance Theatre |
| 7. ODC/Dance Company | 32. Koresh Dance Company |
| 8. Martha Graham Dance Company | 33. AXIS Dance Company |
| 9. Dallas Black Dance Theatre | 34. Eisenhower Dance Detroit |
| 10. Pilobolus | 35. Camille A. Brown and Dancers |
| 11. L.A. Dance Project | 36. Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company |
| 12. STREB Extreme Action Company | 37. BODYTRAFFIC |
| 13. Step Afrika! | 38. Lula Washington Dance Theatre |
| 14. Cleo Parker Robinson Dance | 39. Repertory Dance Theatre |
| 15. Parsons Dance | 40. PHILADANCO! |
| 16. Dayton Contemporary Dance Company | 41. Bruce Wood Dance Company |
| 17. Urban Bush Women | 42. Blue13 Dance Company |
| 18. NW Dance Project | 43. Joe Goode Performance Group |
| 19. Spectrum Dance Theater | 44. Doug Varone and Dancers |
| 20. Trisha Brown Dance Company | 45. GALLIM |
| 21. A.I.M by Kyle Abraham | 46. Nimbus Dance |
| 22. Diavolo Dance Theatre | 47. GroundWorks DanceTheater |
| 23. Battery Dance | 48. Malashock Dance |
| 24. Urbanity Dance | 49. Carolyn Dorfman Dance |
| 25. Dance Kaleidoscope | 50. Whim W'Him |

¹ For further details on methodology and limitations of this report, including the operational definition of “contemporary and modern companies,” see Section V.

Section II: Scope of the Industry

The Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies operated with combined expenses of \$149,747,879 in fiscal year 2019.

Of the Largest 50,

The Largest 10 account for \$101,830,660 | **68% of total expenditures**

The Largest 25 account for \$127,752,370 | **85% of total expenditures**

The Lower 25 account for \$21,995,509 | **15% total expenditures**

and

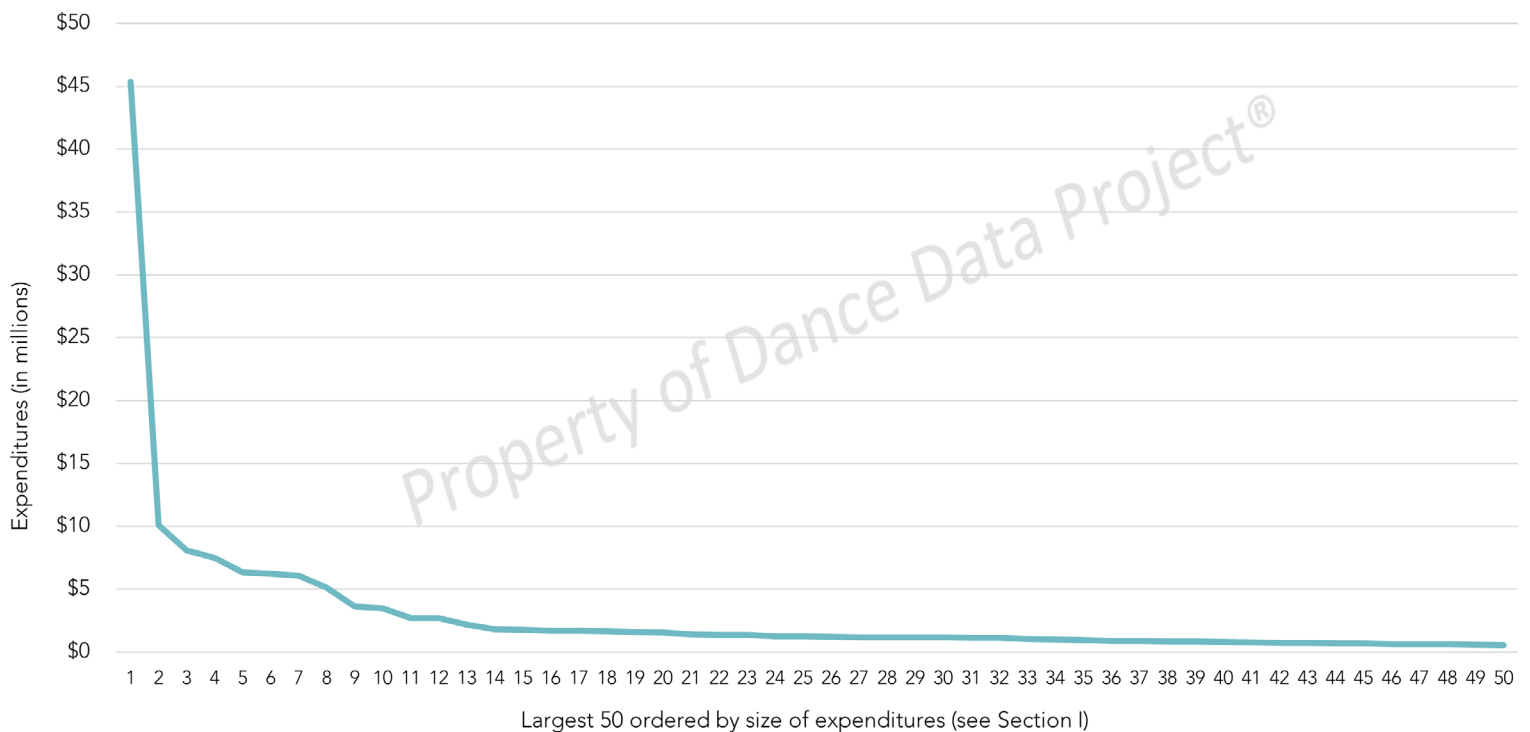
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the largest company by expenses, alone accounts for \$45,352,857 | **30% of total expenditures**

AGGREGATE EXPENDITURES LARGEST 50 U.S. CONTEMPORARY & MODERN DANCE COMPANIES fiscal year 2019



The following figure further shows the distribution of expenses between the Largest 50 contemporary and modern dance companies. Note the sharp drop off between the first and second companies: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the largest organization by expenditures, had more than four times the expenses of Mark Morris Dance Group, the second largest.

**DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENDITURES
LARGEST 50 U.S. CONTEMPORARY & MODERN DANCE COMPANIES
fiscal year 2019**



Nota Bene:

Removing Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater from the Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies, and instead including the 51st largest company, Contra Tiempo, would change the aggregate expenditures to a total of \$104,931,628.

Accordingly,

The Largest 10 would account for \$59,169,031 | **56% of total expenditures**

The Largest 25 would account for \$83,607,367 | **80% of total expenditures**

The Second 25 would account for \$21,324,26 | **20% total expenditures**

Section III: Comparison to Ballet

The following section uses DDP's past research to bring further context to the findings on contemporary and modern dance companies. As DDP's research has focused primarily on ballet companies previously, here ballet is used as a point of reference.

Aggregate Expenditures

DDP's most recent report on the [Largest 50 U.S. Ballet Companies](#)² showed that in fiscal year 2019:

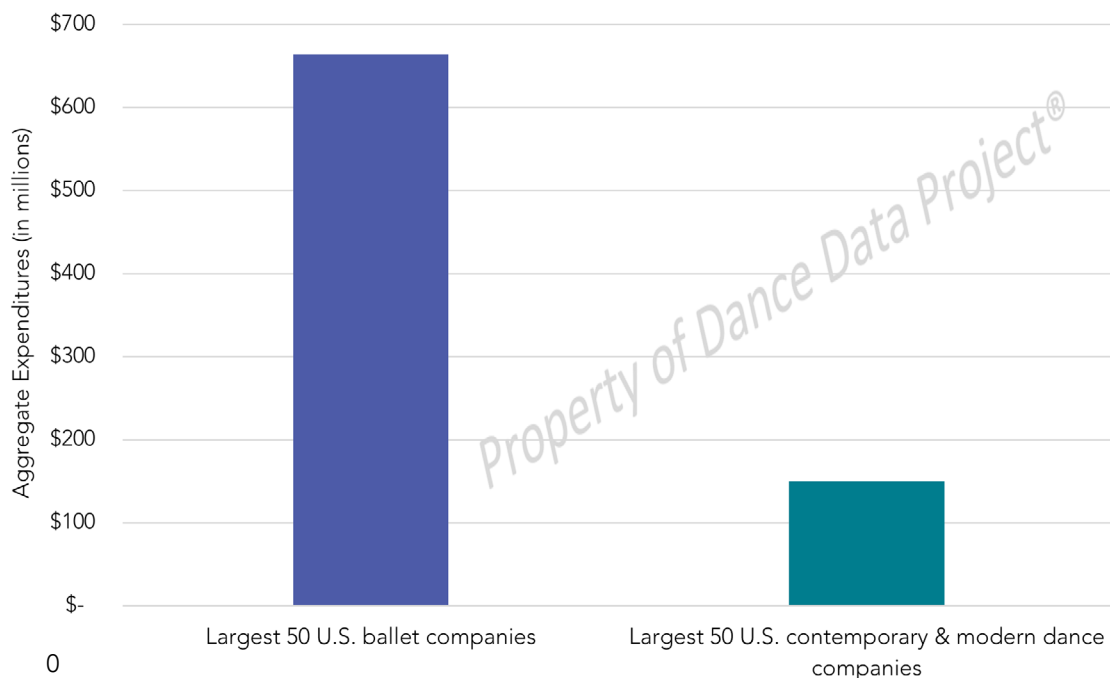
The Largest 50 ballet companies operated with combined expenses of \$664,103,510.

That same year,

The Largest 50 contemporary and modern dance companies operated with combined expenses of \$149,747,879.

That is more than \$500,000,000 less than the ballet companies | 77% less

COMPARISON OF AGGREGATE EXPENDITURES fiscal year 2019



2 The Largest 50 and Next 50 U.S. Ballet companies are also listed in the Appendix of this Report.

Adjusted Expenditures

DDP chose to include five companies in its research on both ballet and contemporary/modern dance companies:

- Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
- Dallas Black Dance Theatre
- Hubbard Street Dance Chicago
- L.A. Dance Project
- PHILADANCO!

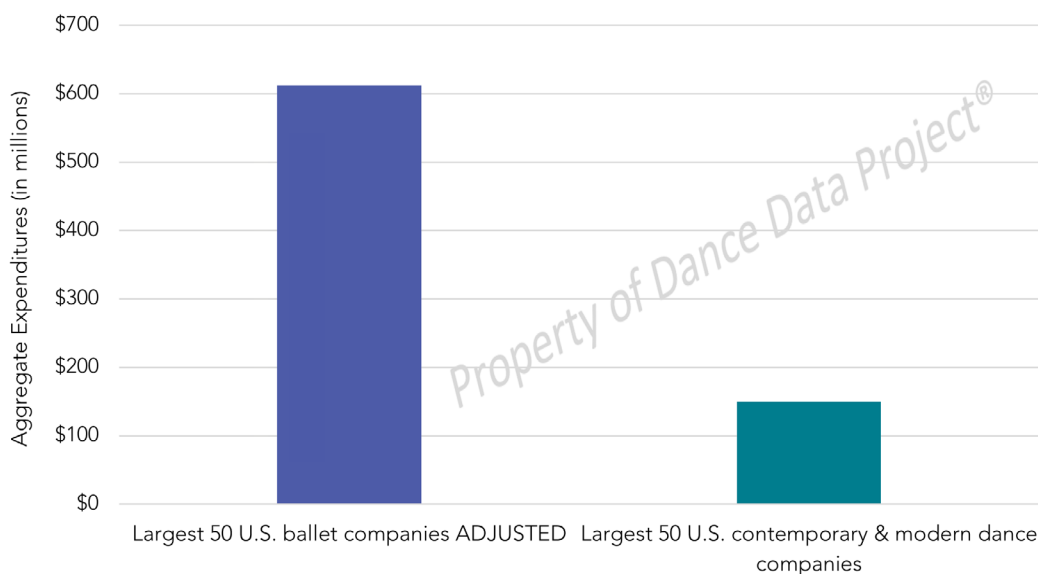
Of these five, the first four companies fell into the fiscal range of both the Largest 50 U.S. ballet companies and the Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern companies. (PHILADANCO! was included only in the Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern companies, as it was #81 in the ballet listing.)

Because of this, the two categories in the previous figure have four shared companies (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and L.A. Dance Project). These companies together account for 9% of the aggregate expenditures for the 50 ballet companies and 39% of the aggregate expenditures for the 50 contemporary and modern companies.

The following figure removes those four companies from the aggregate expenditures of the ballet companies. Thus, here the four companies (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and L.A. Dance Project) are included only in the contemporary and modern companies.

To balance the ballet category at 50 companies, the next four largest ballet companies have been included. The adjusted aggregate ballet expenditures are \$612,625,944.

ADJUSTED COMPARISON OF AGGREGATE EXPENDITURES *fiscal year 2019*



Fiscal Ranges

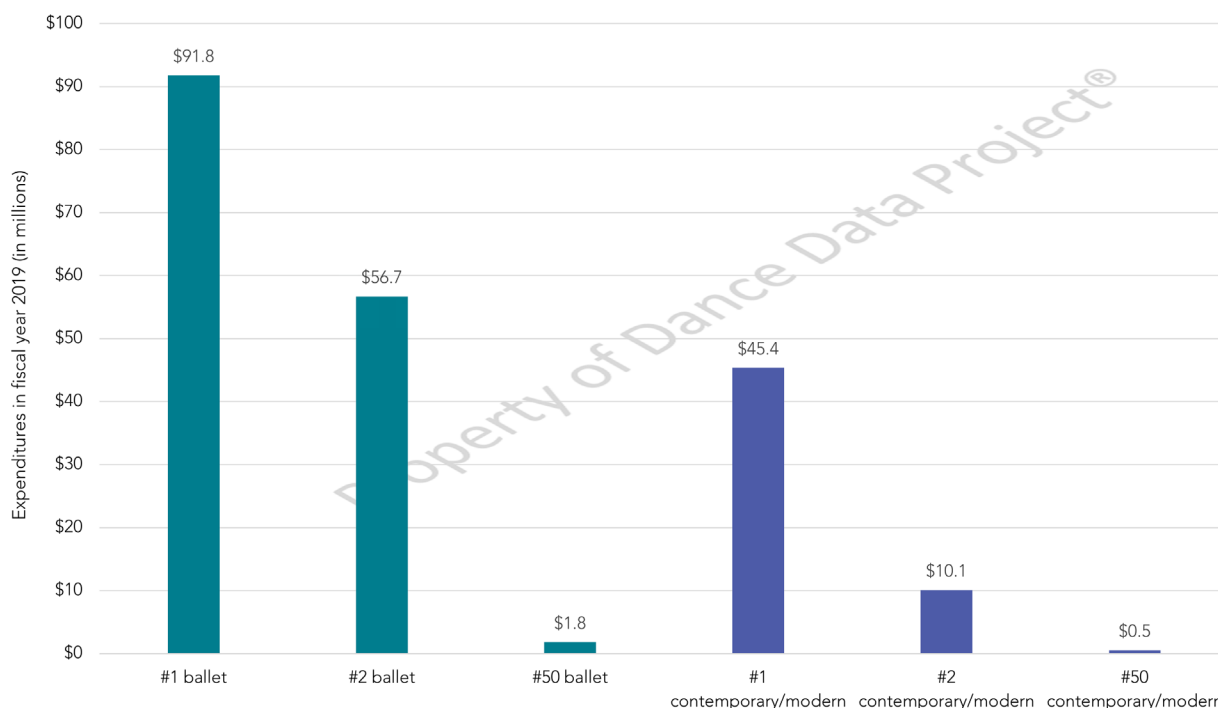
The fiscal range of the Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies was approximately \$500,000 to \$45,400,000.

Removing the largest, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the fiscal range of the Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies becomes approximately \$500,000 to \$10,100,000.

The fiscal range of the Largest 50 U.S. ballet companies was approximately \$1,800,000 to \$91,800,000.

Removing the largest, New York City Ballet, the fiscal range of the Largest 50 U.S. ballet companies becomes approximately \$1,800,000 to \$56,700,000.

Fiscal Ranges of Largest 50 U.S. Ballet Companies and Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary & Modern Dance Companies



14 contemporary and modern dance companies fell within the fiscal range of the Largest 50 ballet companies. They are listed here alphabetically:

- Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
- The Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company
- Cleo Parker Robinson Dance
- Dallas Black Dance Theatre
- Gibney Company
- Hubbard Street Dance Chicago
- L.A. Dance Project
- Mark Morris Dance Group
- Martha Graham Dance Company
- ODC/Dance Company
- Paul Taylor Dance Company
- Pilobolus
- Step Afrika!
- STREB Extreme Action Company

Section IV: Founding Dates and Artistic Directors

Gender Distribution of Current Artistic Directors

There are a total of 52³ Artistic Directors leading the Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies. Of these:

- 26 are women (50%)
- 26 are men (50%)

Current Artistic Directors Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary & Modern Dance Companies



Among the Artistic Directors of the Largest 10, there are:

- 6 women (55%)
- 5 men (45%)

Among the Artistic Directors of the Largest 25, there are:

- 14 women (52%)
- 13 men (48%)

Among the Artistic Directors of the Second 25, there are:

- 12 women (48%)
- 13 men (52%)

DDP has previously researched the gender distribution of Artistic Directors at U.S. ballet companies. These new findings indicate that within large modern and contemporary companies, artistic leadership is split equitably between women and men. Contrarily, in ballet companies, men hold a significant majority of the Artistic Director positions, particularly in the companies with the largest budgets. Specifically within the Largest 25 U.S. ballet companies, men hold 80% of Artistic Director positions.

³ Two companies, Pilobolus and Urban Bush Women, have two Artistic Directors.

Gender Distribution of Founding Artistic Directors

Altogether, the Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies were founded by a total of 65 people.⁴ Of these:

- 35 were women (54%)
- 30 were men (46%)

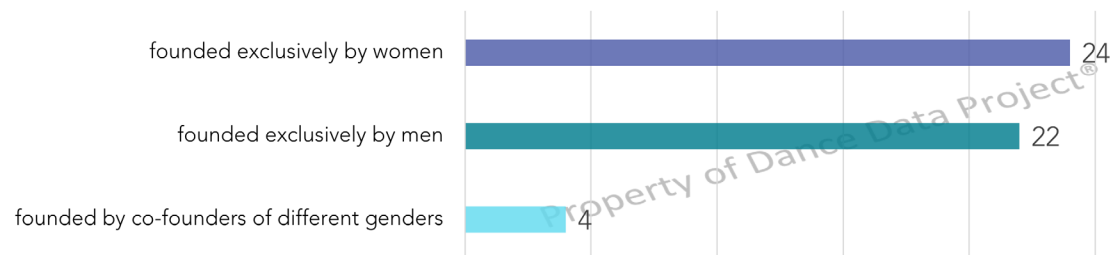
Founders Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary & Modern Dance Companies



and

- 24 companies were founded exclusively by women (48%)
- 22 companies were founded exclusively by men (44%)
- 4 companies were co-founded by people of different genders (8%)

Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary & Modern Dance Companies



⁴ Ten companies were co-founded by multiple directors.

Additionally, 29 current Artistic Directors are also the founder (or a co-founder) of their companies (56%). Of these:

- 13 are women (45%)
- 16 are men (55%)

Founding Artistic Directors Still in Leadership Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary & Modern Dance Companies



Age and Founding Dates of Companies

Of the Largest 50 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies:

- Martha Graham Dance Company is the oldest, founded in 1926 (95 years old).
- Other companies which are older than 60 years include:
 - » Limón Dance Company (1946)
 - » Paul Taylor Dance Company (1954)
 - » Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (1958)
- L.A. Dance Project is the youngest, founded in 2012 (9 years old).
- Other companies which are younger than 15 years include:
 - » Bruce Wood Dance (2010)
 - » Whim W'Him (2009)
 - » Urbanity Dance (2008)
 - » GALLIM (2008)
 - » BODYTRAFFIC (2007)
- The average age of companies is 37 years, and the standard deviation is 18 years.
- The mode age is 30 years, with four companies founded in 1991.

Section V: Methodology, Limitations, and Notes

Methodology

All data in this Report was publicly sourced. DDP sourced data from company websites and IRS Form 990s via ProPublica's NonProfit Explorer and the IRS Tax Exempt Organization Database. The IRS exempt organization master file was also used as a resource to expand scope. DDP searched for companies with National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) code A62 (dance).

DDP respects the gender identities of both people who align within the gender binary and those who are non binary or gender expansive. The gender breakdowns shown in the artistic leadership are gathered from publicly available data, including the pronouns used in the director's biographies, and identified to the best ability of DDP's research team. The gender identities have not been individually verified by the people or companies represented in this study.

Fiscal Data Limitations

For the development of the Largest 50 list, DDP utilized data from the fiscal year ending in 2019, referred to by DDP as fiscal year 2019. This was the most recent year for which fiscal information was consistently available at the time of data collection. For Lula Washington Dance Theatre, the most recent fiscal data available was from fiscal year 2018. All figures are in U.S. dollars. Please note that all fiscal information in this Report is from before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When comparing dance groups, it is important to note differences in their structures. Some operate schools and/or dance centers, in addition to their professional dance companies. These schools and dance centers are a significant source of both revenue and expenses. Additionally, there are many contemporary and modern dance companies which operate on a project basis. DDP has not differentiated between these modes of operation for this Report.

Due to the limitations of publicly available data, DDP is unable to access fiscal information for companies which are not non profit organizations, including but not limited to companies which are fiscally sponsored and Limited Liability Companies (LLCs). Such companies have therefore been excluded from this study.

Note: DDP identified two Martha Graham Dance non profit organizations: Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance Inc and Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance Inc. DDP has included only the latter, which encompasses the professional dance company. The former had expenses of over \$1 million in fiscal year 2019. Including the two organizations together would move Martha Graham Dance Company up one place in the Largest 50, switching it with ODC/Dance Company.

Operational Definition of Contemporary and/or Modern Dance Company

For the purposes of this study, DDP defines a “contemporary and/or modern dance company” as a professional performing company that uses the word(s) contemporary and/or modern in its name or self description. This definition also includes companies whose choreographic works are distinguished as an eclectic fusion of different dance genres. Contemporary dance is a genre developed during the mid-twentieth century, deriving inspiration from (and rebelling against) many forms including ballet, modern, jazz, African and African diasporic dances, classical Indian dance, mixed martial arts, physical theater, and more. DDP’s research included many companies whose mission has been to create work that is experimentative, progressive, and infused with multiple dance styles.

DDP remains generous and open-minded with the definition and recognizes that the art form is constantly evolving.

All the companies included in this study are U.S. based, non profit organizations that employ two or more dancers to perform dance works. DDP is not able to access fiscal information for companies which are not non profits. Additionally, contemporary ballet companies have been excluded from this study and are instead included in DDP’s research on ballet companies.

With any inquiries or comments, we invite you to contact DDP Research and Special Projects Lead Michayla Kelly at mkelly@dancedatapoint.com.

APPENDIX:

Largest 50 and Next 50 U.S. Ballet Companies

The following companies are ordered by size of annual expenses and comprise the primary sample of ballet companies studied for Dance Data Project® 2021 Reports. For further details and information on sources and methodology, please view the full report: [Largest 50 U.S. Ballet Companies and Scope of the Industry](#).

Largest 50 U.S. Ballet Companies

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. New York City Ballet | 26. Milwaukee Ballet |
| 2. San Francisco Ballet | 27. Ballet Hispánico |
| 3. American Ballet Theatre | 28. BalletMet |
| 4. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater | 29. Richmond Ballet |
| 5. Boston Ballet | 30. Orlando Ballet |
| 6. Houston Ballet | 31. Hubbard Street Dance Chicago |
| 7. Pacific Northwest Ballet | 32. Dance Theatre of Harlem |
| 8. Joffrey Ballet | 33. Carolina Ballet |
| 9. Miami City Ballet | 34. Alonzo King LINES Ballet |
| 10. Pennsylvania Ballet | 35. Nevada Ballet Theatre |
| 11. Atlanta Ballet | 36. Ballet Memphis |
| 12. The Washington Ballet | 37. Aspen Santa Fe Ballet ⁵ |
| 13. Ballet West | 38. Louisville Ballet |
| 14. Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre | 39. American Repertory Ballet |
| 15. Cincinnati Ballet | 40. Smuin Ballet |
| 16. Kansas City Ballet | 41. Oklahoma City Ballet |
| 17. Colorado Ballet | 42. Dallas Black Dance Theatre |
| 18. Texas Ballet Theater | 43. Los Angeles Ballet |
| 19. Ballet Austin | 44. Sacramento Ballet |
| 20. Ballet Arizona | 45. Grand Rapids Ballet |
| 21. Oregon Ballet Theatre | 46. L.A. Dance Project |
| 22. Nashville Ballet | 47. BalletX |
| 23. Charlotte Ballet | 48. Eugene Ballet |
| 24. The Sarasota Ballet | 49. The Alabama Ballet |
| 25. Tulsa Ballet | 50. Festival Ballet Providence |

5 Aspen Santa Fe Ballet has announced the dissolution of their professional company.

Next 50 U.S. Ballet Companies

The expansion of our survey has allowed DDP to produce in 2021, for the first time, a sample of the “Next 50” U.S. Ballet Companies. These are the companies that comprised #51 - #100 when the full sample was ordered by size of annual expenses.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Ballet Idaho | 26. Boulder Ballet |
| 2. Ballet Magnificat! | 27. Ballet Theatre of Maryland |
| 3. Indianapolis Ballet | 28. Ballet Pensacola |
| 4. California Ballet | 29. Diablo Ballet |
| 5. New Jersey Ballet Company | 30. Brooklyn Ballet |
| 6. American Midwest Ballet | 31. PHILADANCO! |
| 7. Fort Wayne Ballet | 32. James Sewell Ballet |
| 8. Columbia City Ballet | 33. The Minnesota Ballet |
| 9. Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo | 34. The Tallahassee Ballet |
| 10. New Ballet - San Jose | 35. Arts Ballet Theatre of Florida |
| 11. Ballet San Antonio | 36. Central West Ballet |
| 12. State Street Ballet | 37. Ballet Des Moines |
| 13. Saint Louis Ballet | 38. The Georgia Ballet |
| 14. Wonderbound | 39. First State Ballet Theatre |
| 15. Island Moving Company | 40. Ballet Arkansas |
| 16. Post:ballet | 41. Ballet Fantastique |
| 17. Maine State Ballet | 42. Connecticut Ballet |
| 18. Collage Dance Collective | 43. Ballet Palm Beach |
| 19. Charlottesville Ballet | 44. Verb Ballets |
| 20. Manassas Ballet Theatre | 45. Albany Berkshire Ballet |
| 21. Madison Ballet | 46. Portland Ballet |
| 22. City Ballet of San Diego | 47. Menlowe Ballet |
| 23. Mystic Ballet | 48. Utah Metropolitan Ballet |
| 24. Rochester City Ballet | 49. Pacific Festival Ballet |
| 25. Oakland Ballet Company | 50. Missouri Contemporary Ballet |

Note: The end of the Largest 50 and the beginning of the Next 50 are quite close in size of annual expenses. Ballet Idaho (#1 in Next 50) had annual expenses of only \$29,766 less than Festival Ballet Providence (#50 in Largest 50) for fiscal year 2019.