



The Largest U.S. Contemporary & Modern Dance Companies

JUNE 2023

Report Summary

The following is Dance Data Project®'s second report analyzing the Largest U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies. For the 2023 report, the DDP research team expanded beyond the **Largest 50** U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies to include 127 dance companies total. This report examines the gender distribution of leadership among artistic directors, company founders, executive directors/CEOs/managing directors, associate/assistant artistic directors, and rehearsal directors across all 127 companies.

The [2021 Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary and Modern Dance Companies Report](#) showcased the gender distribution of artistic directors and company founders at the **Largest 50** U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies. Of the 52 artistic directors, 26 were women (50%) and 26 were men (50%). Of the 65 company founders, 35 were women (54%) and 30 were men (46%).

The 2023 report showcases a major increase in female-led and female-founded companies as the number of companies examined has expanded 2.5 times. Of the 137 current artistic directors, 87 are women (63.5%), 48 are men (35%), and 2 are gender expansive (1.5%). Similarly, of the 153 company founders, 93 are women (60.8%), 58 are men (37.9%), and 2 are gender expansive (1.3%).

The gender distribution of executive directors/CEOs/managing directors, associate/assistant artistic directors, and rehearsal directors also highlights a higher employment of women than men. DDP identifies 96 executive directors total, of which 64 are women (67%) and 32 are men (33%). Of the 32 associate/assistant artistic directors, 24 are women (75%) and 8 are men (25%). Lastly, women occupy 67% of rehearsal director positions.

Clearly, the contemporary and modern dance world offer far more leadership opportunities for women than classical dance. However, as noted in the first report, the budget size is orders of magnitude smaller.

Part II of this report examining budget size and compensation from FY 2021 990s will be published this upcoming August.

This Report includes the following sections:

- I. U.S Contemporary & Modern Companies Surveyed
- II. Gender Distribution of Leadership:
 - A. Artistic Directors
 - B. Company Founders
 - C. Executive Directors/CEOs/Managing Directors
 - D. Associate/Assistant Artistic Directors
 - E. Rehearsal Directors
- III. Comparison to Ballet Leadership
- IV. Operational Definitions, Methodology, and Limitations

Section I: U.S Contemporary & Modern Companies Surveyed

The following list of 127 companies represents the largest contemporary and/or modern dance companies in the United States based on FY 2019 data. Companies are listed here alphabetically, and companies highlighted in teal represent the **Largest 50** companies from the [2021 Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary and Modern Dance Companies Report](#).

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|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. A.I.M by Kyle Abraham | 33. Danse4Nia Repertory Ensemble (Phoenix Danse) | 65. Kim Robards Dance |
| 2. Aerial Dance Chicago | 34. Davis Contemporary Dance Company | 66. Koresh Dance Company |
| 3. Alison Cook Beatty Dance | 35. Dayton Contemporary Dance Company | 67. Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers |
| 4. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater | 36. Deborah Hay Dance Company | 68. L.A. Dance Project |
| 5. Amy Marshall Dance Company | 37. Diavolo Dance Theatre | 69. LA Contemporary Dance Company |
| 6. Amy Seiwert's Imagery | 38. Dimensions Dance Theater | 70. LEVYdance |
| 7. Artichoke Dance Company | 39. Doug Varone and Dancers | 71. Limón Dance Company |
| 8. Ate9 Dance Company | 40. Eisenhower Dance Detroit | 72. Lineage Dance |
| 9. AXIS Dance Company | 41. Ellen Sinopoli Dance Company | 73. Liss Fain Dance |
| 10. Backhausdance | 42. Emerge 125 | 74. Lori Belilove & the Isadora Duncan Dance Company |
| 11. Ballet des Amériques/Carole Alexis Ballet Theatre | 43. Eryc Taylor Dance | 75. Lula Washington Dance Theatre |
| 12. BANDALOOOP | 44. Flyaway Productions | 76. Lydia Johnson Dance |
| 13. Battery Dance | 45. GALLIM | 77. Malashock Dance |
| 14. Big Muddy Dance Company | 46. Garth Fagan Dance | 78. Mark Morris Dance Group |
| 15. Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company (The) | 47. Gibney Company | 79. Martha Graham Dance Company |
| 16. Black Label Movement | 48. Gregory Hancock Dance Theatre | 80. MashUp Contemporary Dance Company |
| 17. Blue13 Dance Company | 49. GroundWorks DanceTheater | 81. MICHIIYAYA |
| 18. BODYTRAFFIC | 50. Hedwig Dances | 82. Minnesota Dance Theatre |
| 19. BoSoma Dance Company | 51. Helen Simoneau Danse | 83. MORAPORVIDA CONTEMPORARY DANCE |
| 20. Boston Dance Theater | 52. Hivewild | 84. Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago |
| 21. BrockusRED | 53. Houston Contemporary Dance | 85. Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company |
| 22. Bruce Wood Dance | 54. Hubbard Street Dance Chicago | 86. New Dialect |
| 23. Buglisi Dance Theatre | 55. Inlet Dance Theatre | 87. Nimbus Dance |
| 24. Camille A. Brown & Dancers | 56. Invertigo Dance Theatre | 88. NW Dance Project |
| 25. Carolyn Dorfman Dance | 57. Jacob Jonas | 89. ODC/Dance Company |
| 26. Chamber Dance Project | 58. JAE - Jean Appolon Expressions | 90. Open Dance Project |
| 27. Cleo Parker Robinson Dance | 59. Jamel Gaines Creative Outlet | 91. Ormao Dance Company |
| 28. Contra Tiempo | 60. Joe Goode Performance Group | 92. Owen/Cox Dance Group |
| 29. Dallas Black Dance Theatre | 61. Kairos Dance Theater | 93. Parsons Dance |
| 30. Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company | 62. Keigwin + Company | 94. Paul Taylor Dance Company |
| 31. Dance Iquail | 63. Khambatta Dance Company | |
| 32. Dance Kaleidoscope | 64. Khecari | |

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|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 95. Peridance Contemporary Dance Company | 105. SALT Contemporary Dance | 117. TU Dance |
| 96. PHILADANCO! - The Philadelphia Dance Company | 106. Sarasota Contemporary Dance | 118. Urban Bush Women |
| 97. Pilobolus | 107. Sidra Bell Dance New York | 119. Urban Souls |
| 98. Pony Box Dance Theatre | 108. Spectrum Dance Theater | 120. Urbanity Dance |
| 99. Red Clay Dance Company | 109. Stefanie Nelson Dancegroup | 121. Vim Vigor Dance |
| 100. Reggie Wilson / Fist and Heel Performance Group | 110. Step Afrika! | 122. Visceral Dance Chicago |
| 101. Rennie Harris Puremovement | 111. Stephen Petronio Company | 123. Viver Brasil Dance Company |
| 102. Repertory Dance Theatre | 112. STREB Extreme Action Company | 124. Wellspring/Cori Terry & Dancers |
| 103. Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company | 113. The Kennedy Dancers Inc. | 125. Whim W'Him |
| 104. Robert Moses' KIN | 114. Threads Dance Project | 126. WHITE WAVE - Young Soon Kim Dance Company |
| | 115. Tiffany Mills Company | 127. Wylliams/Henry Contemporary Dance |
| | 116. Trisha Brown Dance Company | |

Section IIA: Gender Distribution of Artistic Directors

There are 137 artistic directors, including 9 co-directors within the Largest 127 U.S. contemporary and modern companies.

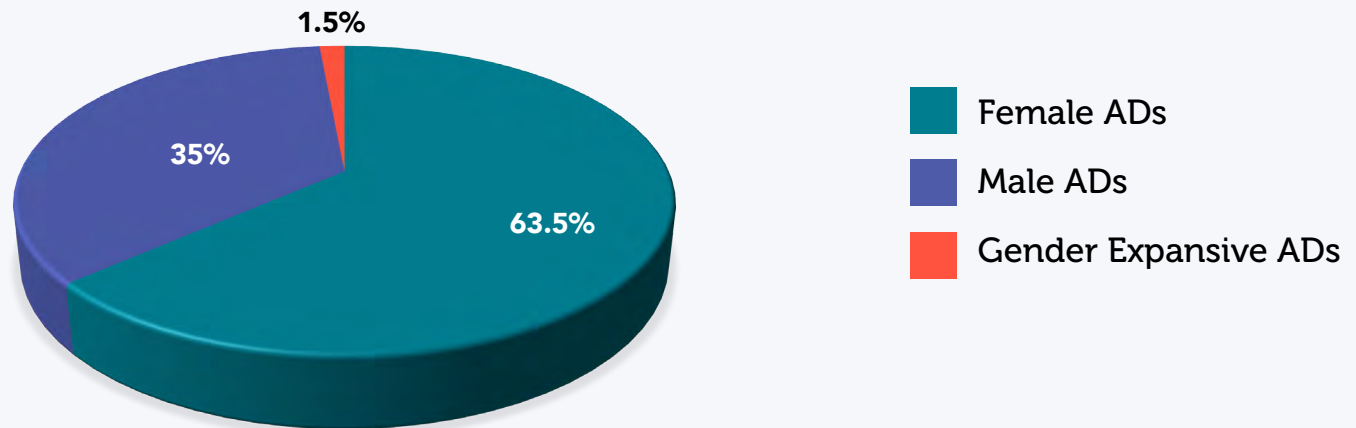
Of these 137 artistic directors:

- 87 are women (63.5%)
- 48 are men (35%)
- 2 are gender expansive (1.5%)

Of the 9 co-artistic directors:

- 5 partnerships are composed of all female directors (55.6%)¹
- 0 partnerships are composed of all male directors (0%)
- 4 partnerships are composed of mixed gender directors (44.4%)

Largest U.S. Contemporary & Modern Companies Artistic Directors



In the **Largest 50**, there are 29 female and 24 male Artistic Directors

55 % Female | 45% Male

¹ MashUp Contemporary Dance Company is governed by a four person "Creative Council" that oversees daily operations and rehearsals. Within this collaborative leadership council, any member may be appointed as the 'Artistic Lead' to be more physically present in the rehearsal studio and at all events. In 2022, Victoria Brown served as the Artistic Lead, and in 2023, it has been shared by Stephanie Heckert and Sarah Rodenhouse.

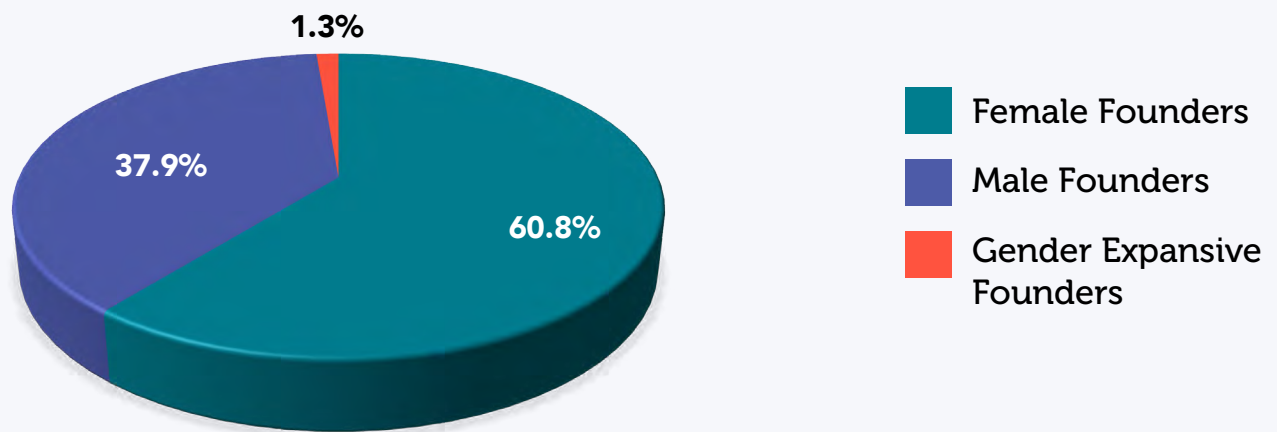
Section IIB: Gender Distribution of Company Founders

The Largest 127 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies were founded by a total of 153 people.

Of these 153 founders:

- 93 are women (60.8%)
- 58 are men (37.9%)
- 2 are gender expansive (1.3%)

Largest U.S. Contemporary & Modern Companies Company Founders



In the **Largest 50**, there are 35 female and 30 male Company Founders

54% Female | 46% Male

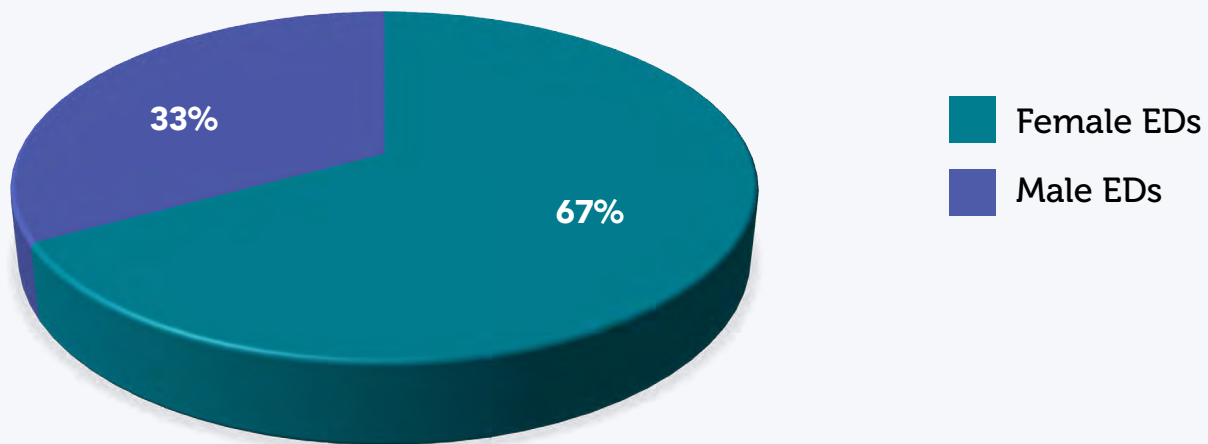
Section IIC: Gender Distribution of Executive Directors/CEOs/Managing Directors

There are a total of 96 executive directors/CEOs/managing directors leading the Largest 127 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies.

Of these 96 executive directors/CEOs/managing directors:

- 64 are women (67%)
- 32 are men (33%)

Largest U.S. Contemporary & Modern Companies Executive Directors/CEOs/Managing Directors



In the **Largest 50**, there are 28 female and 20 male Executive Directors/CEOs/Managing Directors

58% Female | 42% Male

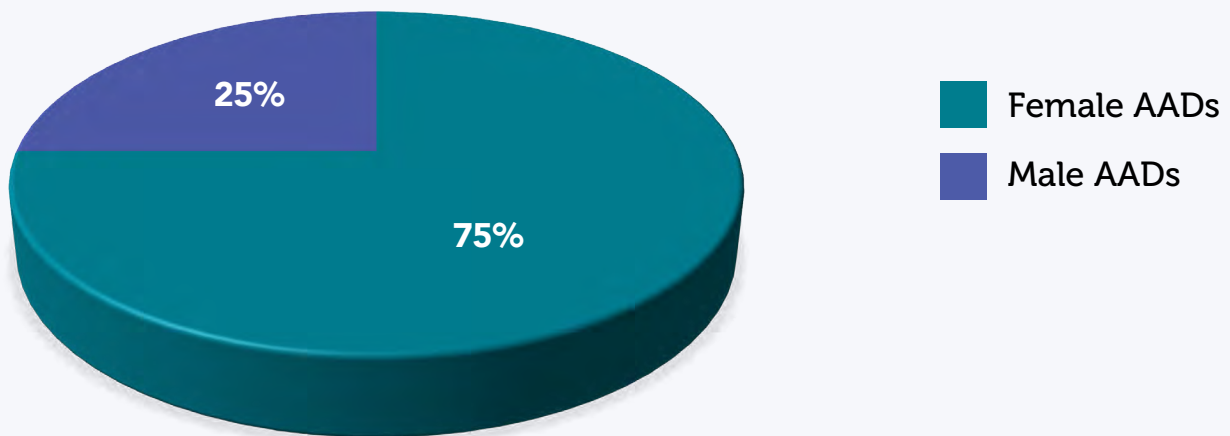
Section IID: Gender Distribution of Associate/Assistant Artistic Directors

In the Largest 127 U.S. contemporary and modern companies, there are 32 associate/assistant artistic directors.

Of these 32 associate/assistant artistic directors:

- 24 are women (75%)
- 8 are men (25%)

Largest U.S. Contemporary & Modern Companies Associate/Assistant Artistic Directors



In the **Largest 50**, there are 16 female and 7 male Associate/Assistant Artistic Directors

70 % Female | 30% Male

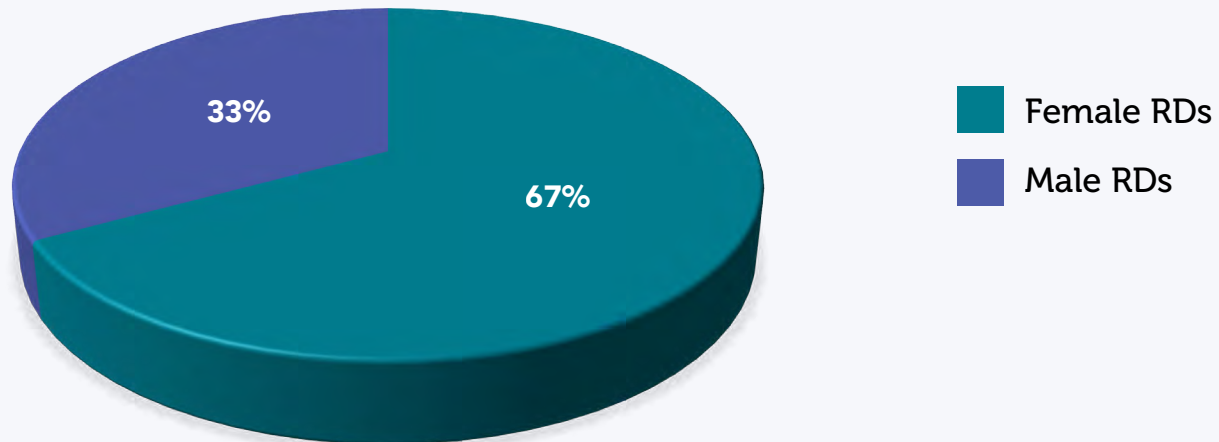
Section IIE: Gender Distribution of Rehearsal Directors

There are a total of 51 rehearsal directors leading the Largest 127 U.S. contemporary and modern dance companies.

Of these 51 rehearsal directors:

- 34 are women (67%)
- 17 are men (33%)

Largest U.S. Contemporary & Modern Companies Rehearsal Directors



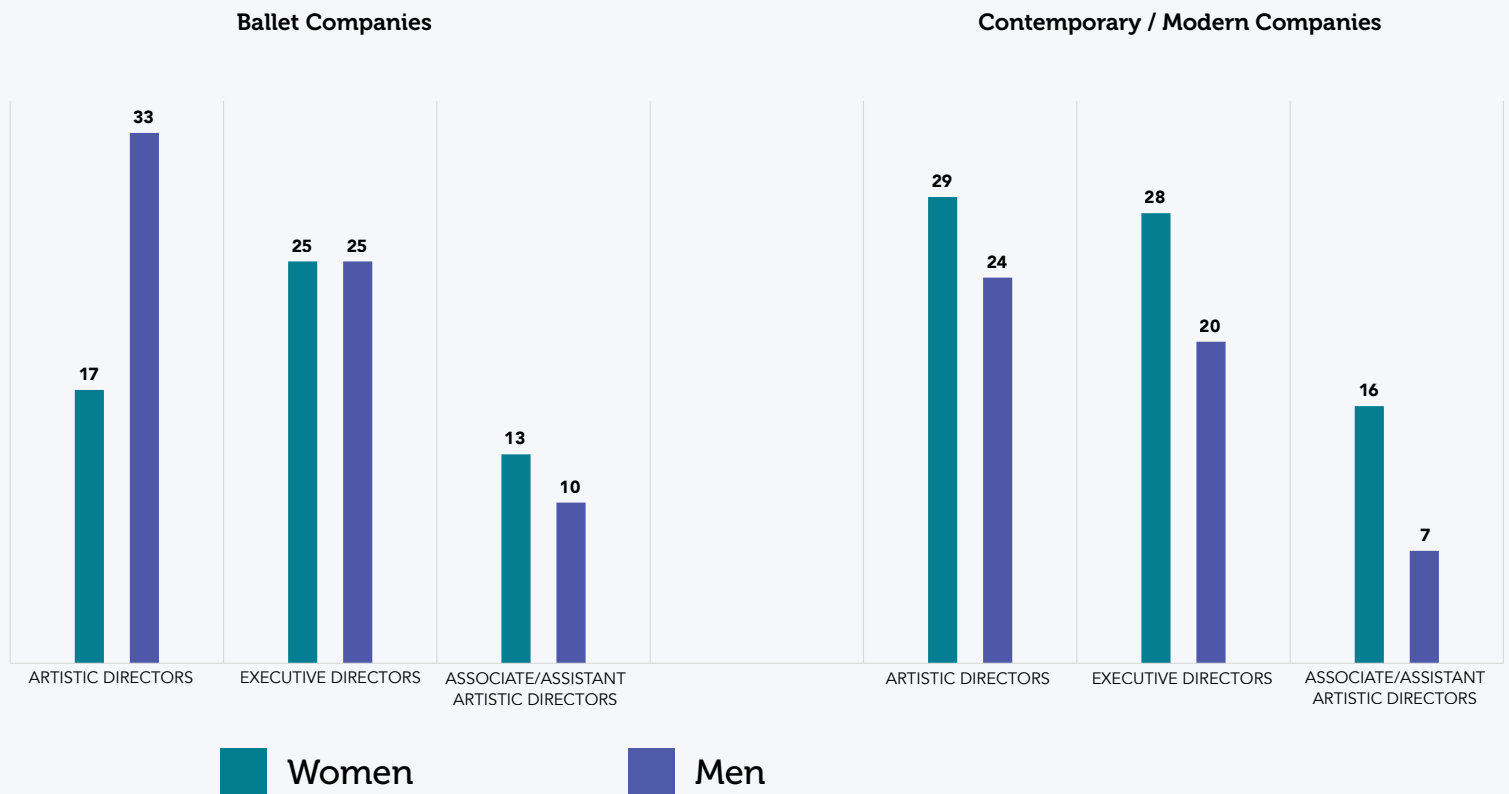
In the **Largest 50**, there are 15 female and 11 male Rehearsal Directors

58% Female | 42% Male

Section III: Comparison to Ballet Leadership

In the [Global Leadership Report 2023](#), DDP researched the gender distribution of artistic directors, executive directors/CEOs/managing directors, and associate/assistant artistic directors at the **Largest 50 U.S. Ballet and Classically Based Companies**. This report showed that women only occupied 34% of artistic director positions, 50% of executive director/CEO/managing director positions, and 57% of associate/assistant artistic directors. By comparison, the gender distribution of leadership within the **Largest 50 U.S. Modern and Contemporary Companies** is split more equitably as women occupy 55% of artistic director positions, 58% of executive director/CEO/managing director positions, and 70% of associate/assistant artistic director positions. Despite having similar total numbers² to the Largest 50 ballet companies within each leadership role, this report demonstrates that women are afforded more leadership opportunities within the modern and contemporary dance industry.

Gender Comparison Between The Largest 50 U.S. Ballet And Contemporary/Modern Dance Companies



² Total numbers refers to the total number of people occupying a leadership role (Ex: The **Largest 50 U.S. Ballet and Classically Based Companies** were led by 50 artistic directors, and the **Largest 50 U.S. Contemporary and Modern Companies** were led by 53 artistic directors).

Section D: Operational Definitions, Methodology, and Limitations

Operational Definitions

Artistic Director

The artistic director(s) of each company was defined as either the person(s) with that title, or the person(s) who most closely fills the role of overseeing and directing artistic operations at the contemporary/modern company.

Executive Director/CEO/Managing Director

The executive director/CEO/managing director of each company was defined as either the person(s) with that title, or the person(s) who most closely fills the role of overseeing and directing managerial operations at the contemporary/modern company.

Associate/Assistant Artistic Director

The associate/assistant artistic director(s) of each company was defined as either the person(s) with that title, or the person(s) who most closely fills the role of artistic assistant at the contemporary/modern company.

Rehearsal Director

The rehearsal director(s) of each company was defined as either the person(s) with that title, or the person(s) who most closely fills the role of overseeing and directing rehearsals at the contemporary/modern company.

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, including but not limited to companies which are fiscally sponsored and Limited Liability Companies (LLCs). Additionally, contemporary ballet companies have been excluded from this study and are instead included in DDP’s research on ballet companies.

Gender

DDP has used the following categories to refer to directors' gender identities in this report: women, men, and gender expansive. In this study, "woman" and "female" are used synonymously, as are "man" and "male". Gender expansive includes individuals who identify as non-binary, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, or otherwise outside of the gender binary. In this research, pronouns were used as an indicator of gender identity. Pronoun data was sourced from biographical information provided on the company websites.

DDP respects and has worked to ensure we accurately represent individuals' gender identities.

Methodology

For this study, DDP focused on prominent contemporary and/or modern dance companies. The list of contemporary and/or modern dance companies used in this report was manually compiled through extensive research, including company websites, social media accounts, director's biographies, national dance publications, news and media articles, and search engine queries. The selection and ranking of contemporary and/or modern companies for the **Largest 50** was sourced from DDP's 2021 **Largest 50** U.S. Contemporary and Modern Dance Companies Report, and the company data for the **Largest 50** U.S. Ballet and Classically Based Companies was sourced primarily from DDP's 2023 Global Leadership Report. To identify gender in positions of leadership, DDP counted individuals who were serving in a specific position as of June 2023.

Limitations

While contemporary and/or modern companies, the IRS, and DDP each take every measure to avoid human error, DDP acknowledges the possibility of such error appearing.

Fiscal Data Availability

With the recent uploading of FY 2021 information, DDP is prepared to issue a Part II of this report ranking all 127 companies by budget expenditure in August 2023.

For the development of the Largest 127 list, DDP utilized data from the fiscal year ending in 2019 (Ex: July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019). DDP has chosen to use data from FY 2019, comparing all companies within fiscal year 2019 for consistency. When FY 2019 data was unavailable, DDP used the FY 2018 fiscal year data.

Company Structures

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.

With any inquiries or comments, we invite you to contact DDP Research Coordinator Jenna Magrath at jmagrath@dancedataproject.com