

CELEBRATING
50 YEARS



DAYTON CONTEMPORARY DANCE COMPANY

THE COMPANY'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Annual Report 2018 / 2019





Fifty Years.

Fifty years. One contemporary dance company. A half-century of African American art. Fifty years of touching the lives of students in the classroom. Fifty years of staying loyal to Miami Valley audiences. Five decades as cultural ambassador to the world for Dayton, the state of Ohio, and the nation.

Over a two year period, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC) celebrated its 50th anniversary. This report focuses on the highlights of that period, beginning in February 2018, when DCDC's winter concert *Reunited* launched the celebration, which ended with *In the Spirit of...Abundant Blessings* in December 2019, the final performance of the 50th anniversary season.

The period featured many hallmarks, 63 in total. This report covers in chronological order the most noteworthy of these hallmarks, emphasizing community work, artistic milestones, and strategic successes.



Reunited

February 24, 2018

This concert publicly launched DCDC's 50th anniversary celebration. The program featured ten classic works from DCDC's extensive repertoire. Former DCDC dancers briefly graced the stage, and great moments included an excerpt of *Spirituals in White* by Jeraldine Blunden; *Awassa Astrig/Ostrich*, a solo dance by Asadata Dafora and performed by G.D. Harris; *Promontory* by former DCDC Artistic Director Kevin Ward, and *This I Know For Sure...* by Ray Mercer. The full house included long-time DCDC former dancers and founding supporters, some of whom hadn't been to a DCDC concert in a long while. This once-only concert evoked the spirit of a family reunion.

Irma Lazarus Award

May 16, 2018

DCDC received Ohio's top honor for the state's arts organizations: the Irma Lazarus Award. The award recognizes individuals or organizations that have helped shape public support for the arts through their work as advocates and have brought national and international recognition to Ohio through sustained dedication to artistic excellence. DCDC's Chief Executive Officer Ro Nita Hawes-Saunders accepted the award on behalf of the company.

Tour to Kazakhstan & Russia

May 7 – June 1, 2018

By invitation of the U.S. Department of State, DCDC toured Kazakhstan and Russia in May 2018. The dancers first performed in Kazakhstan and during cultural exchange workshops they learned native Kazakh dances from the

ensemble Kazyna. In Moscow, DCDC performed at the New Stage at The Bolshoi. An excerpt from a Russian review of DCDC's performance reads: *Dayton Contemporary Dance Company... is a 'black diamond' in the crown of African-American dance.*

It was something in my soul I can't explain something like a God moment. – Feedback from an attendee to DCDC's Reunited concert in February 2018.



American Dance Festival

June 12 – 16, 2018

DCDC performed at the American Dance Festival (ADF) held in Durham, North Carolina. ADF is one of the world's top dance festivals where outstanding dance companies and dance artists perform before their peers. It was at an ADF conference in 1988 when DCDC first received acclaim by the international dance community. At the 2018 festival, DCDC was the first to perform and received excellent reviews.

Showcase at National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

September 15, 2018

One of DCDC's ongoing strategic goals is to bring its performing arts and arts education services to Cincinnati and surrounding areas. In September, DCDC convened a special gathering of local community leaders at the Harriet Tubman Theater at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati. Representatives of DCDC, both staff and board members, discussed the company, its history, offerings, and its future relationship with Cincinnati. At one point in the presentation, the first company dancers performed a short work from the company's most recent repertoire. In the time since the presentation, DCDC entered the third consecutive year of conducting a residency at Frederick Douglass Elementary School in Cincinnati. DCDC also began reaching other Cincinnati schools in 2019-2020. In February 2020, DCDC performed for the first time at the Aronoff Center for the Arts as the company continues to build upon its growing Cincinnati and southwest Ohio network.

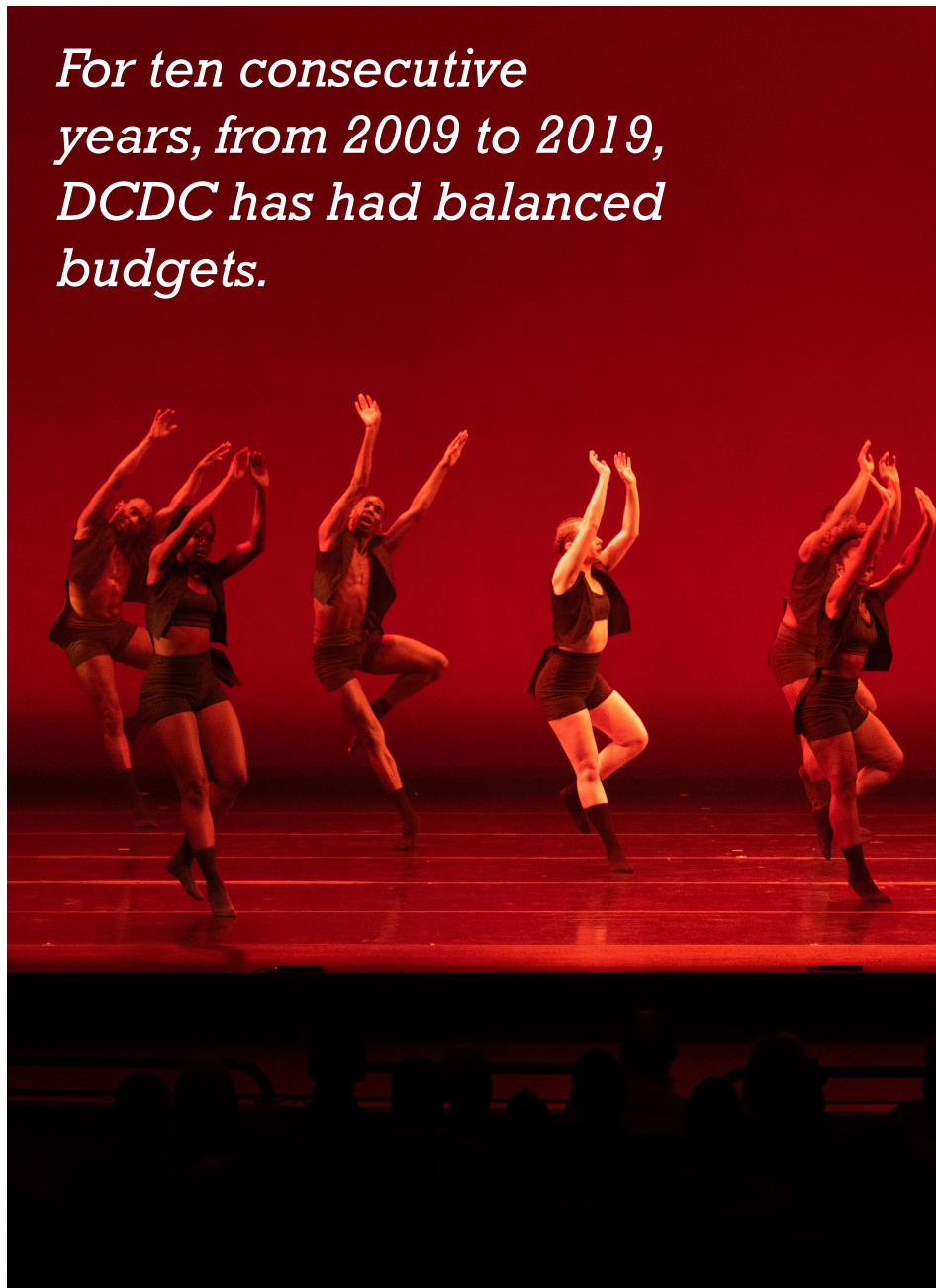
DCDC is the longest, continuously running African American arts organization in the Midwest, United States.

Second China Tour

September 24 – 28, 2018

After its tours to Kazakhstan and Russia, DCDC toured China—for the second time—performing at the Dance Stages Shanghai Contemporary Dance Festival at the Shanghai Magnolia Theater. The company also partnered with the U.S. Consulate in Shanghai to carry out cultural exchange activities in Shanghai and Suzhou. As part of these activities, DCDC dancers worked with students at Shanghai Normal University, Suzhou Art School, and New York University Shanghai. These education sessions also introduced DCDC dancers to traditional and contemporary Chinese dance. University of Dayton was a generous sponsor of this tour and other tours during DCDC's 50th anniversary celebration.

For ten consecutive years, from 2009 to 2019, DCDC has had balanced budgets.





50 YEARS



Dayton Contemporary Dance Company gratefully acknowledges its supporters.

July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

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Richard Lapedes and
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*Here at Frederick Douglass Elementary,
we have seen a decrease in our chronic
absenteeism rates since the
introduction of our partnership with
Dayton Contemporary Dance Company.*

– Principal, Frederick Douglass Elementary School in Cincinnati.

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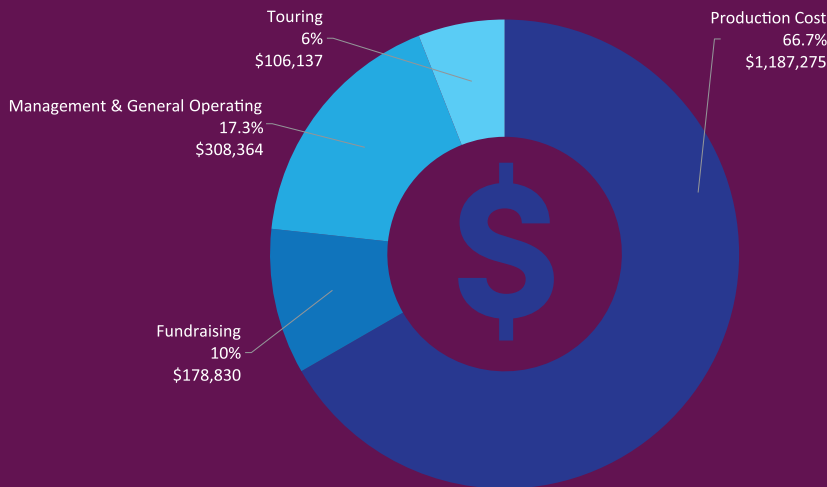
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Dayton Contemporary Dance Company performs locally, nationally, and globally. The dance company's education and community outreach program Teaching, Learning, and Caring reaches over 30,000 youths annually, from pre-K through college. With your help, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company can sustain these efforts to impact the world of dance and a child's creativity and development. The lists above are of names of supporters of Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. We have tried to ensure the accuracy of our records, but we deeply apologize for any omissions or misspellings. Please call us at 937-228-3232 if you have any questions or corrections.

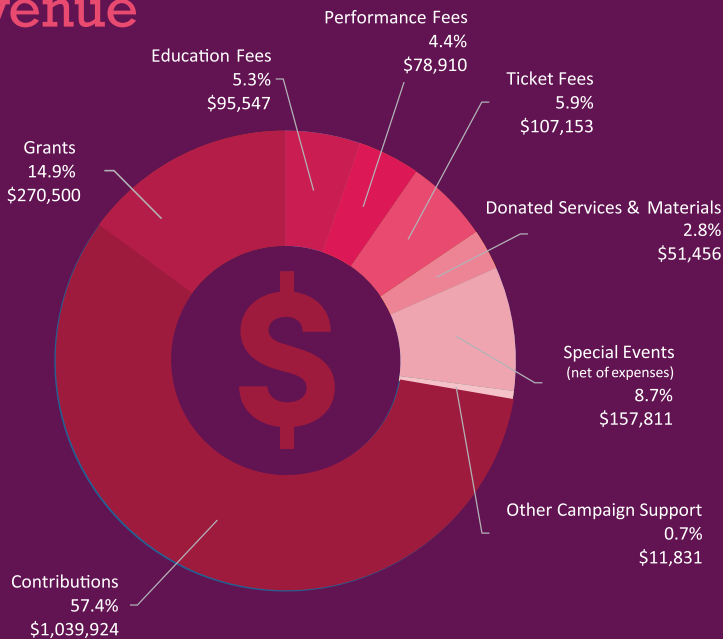
Dayton Contemporary Dance Company is grateful to our supporters!

2018-2019 Financials

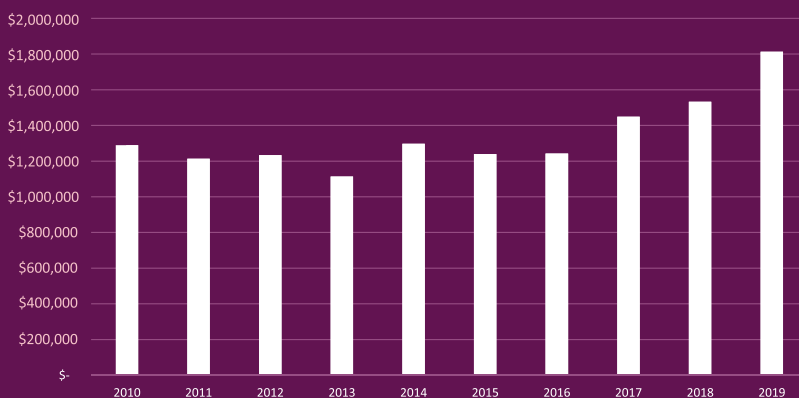
Expenses



Revenue



Yearly Income



A MESSAGE FROM Dayton Contemporary Dance Company's Chair of the Board of Directors

Thanks to all who have made Dayton Contemporary Dance Company's 50th anniversary such a special time in its history. Tens of thousands of people have participated as dancers, audience members, choreographers, board members, staff, technicians, costumers, donors, supporters, and many people from around the world.

This report highlights the activities of this special milestone. I am pleased to report that this year's financials reflect a tenth straight year of balanced budgets. This is a rare achievement for an arts company. For two years, we celebrated our golden anniversary with remarkable concerts featuring extraordinary dance and special national guest artists. Please note the highlights and pause to reflect on the special moments in time that were achieved because of you and your support.

Great art doesn't just happen. Great art comes into being because many people do many things right. On behalf of our Chief Executive Officer, Ro Nita Hawes-Saunders, our Chief Artistic Administrator and Producing Director, Debbie Blunden-Diggs, and our board of directors, I thank you for assisting us with creating exceptional art during these extraordinary times.

Richard Lapedes



The Bench: Journey into Love October 6 – 7, 2018

DCDC gave the world premiere of an unusual full-evening work, *The Bench: Journey into Love* (The Bench). By choreographer Kiesha Lalama, *The Bench* incorporates dance, song, music, and theatre. The story takes place around a seemingly ordinary, wooden park bench that mystically transforms into a symbol of love's endurance and strength. A man and woman meet by a bench, fall in love, marry, and have a family. There are scenes of family comedy and challenges, such as a lively family dinner, the formidable bond between mother and daughter, and sibling rivalry. *The Bench* is a testimony to love and family—even after death!

Conference of the International Association of Blacks in Dance January 22 – 29, 2019

At Dayton Convention Center, the 31st conference and festival for the International Association of Blacks in Dance, or IABD, was held in Dayton, Ohio. IABD's mission *preserves and promotes dance by people of African ancestry or origin, and assists and increases opportunities for artists in advocacy, audience development, education, funding, networking, performance, philosophical dialogue, and touring.* Along with IABD, DCDC proudly co-hosted the conference from January 22 through 29, 2019. The six-day conference convened over 800 dance professionals from all over the U.S. and eight

nations. Workshops, symposiums, master classes, performances, and other activities advanced a deeper understanding of contemporary dance. The event deeply engaged the Dayton community and included the generous participation of the following local organizations: Dayton Art Institute, Dayton Convention Center, Dayton Crowne Plaza, Dayton Metro Library, Marriott at University of Dayton, Metropolitan Arts Center, Sinclair Community College, and Victoria Theatre. Surveys completed by conference attendees reflected an overall high approval of the event and its benefits.

DCDC holds the world's largest archive of classic African American dance works and one of the largest of any kind among contemporary dance companies worldwide.

Onyx: Etched in Stone. Resilient through Time
January 26, 2019

DCDC's winter 2019 concert was *Onyx: Etched in Stone. Resilient through Time*. Occurring at the end of the IABD conference, the concert presented eleven African American dance companies at Victoria Theatre. Presented with IABD, *Onyx: Etched in Stone. Resilient through Time* was a once-in-a-lifetime showcase of the state of the art of contemporary African American dance. The following companies performed: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Dance Theatre of Harlem, DCDC, Deeply Rooted Dance Theatre, Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, Lulu Washington Dance Theatre, Philadanco!, Robert Moses' KIN, and Ronald K. Brown/Evidence: A Dance Company. There were two presentations, which were both sold out. The matinee concert drew DCDC's regular audiences and the evening concert drew attendees from the IABD conference. The reception of this concert was very positive and enthusiastic.

Golden Anniversary Concert
May 4, 2019

To continue celebrations of the 50th anniversary year, DCDC held a collaborative concert with Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra at Benjamin and Marian Schuster Performing Arts Center. *Golden Anniversary Concert* featured three dance works: *American Mo'* by DCDC's Associate Artistic Director Crystal Michelle; *And Each Day You Mean One More* by choreographer and former DCDC Artistic Director Kevin Ward and *Children of the Passage* by Ronald K. Brown and the late Donald McKayle. Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra accompanied DCDC's dancers in *American Mo'*, who performed to an orchestral work by Duke Ellington, and *And Each Day You Mean One More*, which used another orchestral work composed by Derrick Spiva, Jr. The Dayton Brass Band performed for *Children of the Passage* to original music by the jazz ensemble Dirty Dozen Brass Band.



Induction into Dayton Walk of Fame

October 31, 2019

The city of Dayton publicly acknowledged four eminent Daytonians and one outstanding Dayton institution by inducting them into the Dayton Walk of Fame. The Daytonians were civil rights leader Jessie Gooding, urban planner John Gower, and husband-and-wife philanthropists Betsy and Leon Whitney. The Dayton institution was Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. Artistic Staff Chief Artistic Administrator & Producing Director Debbie Blunden-Diggs accepted the honor, stating that her mother, *planted her feet in Dayton 50 years ago because she wanted this company here. Even as DCDC performs around the world, she said, there's no place like home for us.*

Attendance to the 31st annual conference of International Association of Blacks in Dance, co-hosted by DCDC, was the largest of any prior conference. DCDC is a founding member of International Association of Blacks in Dance.



A Byrd's Eye View

October 6 & 7, 2019

The fall concert for 2019, DCDC's *A Byrd's Eye View* was a retrospective on two masterworks by eminent choreographer Donald Byrd. These works were *JLawrence Paint (Harriet Tubman: Remix)* and *The Geography of the Cotton Field*. These large scale dance works demonstrate Byrd's genius as a choreographer and his ability to address the most profound issues and subjects through the art of dance. A special feature of the concert was two interviews between Donald Byrd and Thomas F. DeFrantz.

In the Spirit of...Abundant Blessings

December 6 & 7, 2019

To conclude its two-year celebration of its 50th anniversary, DCDC presented the tenth production of the *In the Spirit of...* concert series. *In the Spirit of...* celebrates the African American church with live music, singing, and dance. This production was named *In the Spirit of...Abundant Blessings* and featured music by Judah Band and nationally renowned gospel singer Shirley Murdock. Music Director Deron Bell led the live music ensemble and the mass community choir. Additional talent included the *In the Spirit of...* Community Choir, The Jeremy Winston Chorale, Trotwood-Madison High School Choir & Singers, and the Cincinnati Choral Academy of Douglass Elementary. As Debbie Blunden-Diggs noted about this concert, *This is a wonderful culminating event for our 50th anniversary. 'In the Spirit of...' is one of my favorite DCDC offerings because it brings the community together.*



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Jeraldyn Blunden

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ro Nita Hawes-Saunders, D.F.A

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CHIEF ARTISTIC ADMINISTRATOR & PRODUCING DIRECTOR

Debbie Blunden-Diggs

ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Qarrienne Blayr and Crystal Michelle

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Elizabeth Ramsey
Nile Alicia Ruff
Quentin ApolloVaughn Sledge
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Breanna Dorsey
Amber Echols
Jordan Garcia
Brianna Rhodes

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EXCLUSIVE TOUR REPRESENTATION

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937-228-3232, ext. 111
michelle@dcdc.org

CELEBRATING
50 YEARS



DAYTON CONTEMPORARY DANCE COMPANY

*As an international
touring company, DCDC
has, over the past two years,
performed at The New Stage at
The Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow,
toured in China (the second
tour to China since 2012), and
toured in Kazakhstan.*