



Strategic Plan FY24

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Overview

As the Ballet Theatre of Maryland approaches its 45th season, our strategic plan aims to propel us into a new era of artistic excellence, community engagement, and organizational sustainability.

Building upon our rich legacy, we envision captivating performances that inspire and transcend boundaries, while fostering a deep appreciation for ballet.

Our plan prioritizes innovation, diversification, and accessibility, seeking to expand our audience, nurture emerging talent, and strengthen collaborations.

With a focus on fiscal responsibility and operational efficiency, we are dedicated to securing resources, enhancing partnerships, and fostering a vibrant arts ecosystem.

Together, we will honor our tradition, embrace the future, and continue to elevate the art of ballet for generations to come.

Process

The development of this strategic plan involved a collaborative and systematic process that engaged stakeholders at all levels of the organization.

We began by gathering input through interviews, surveys, and focus groups to understand perspectives and challenges. Through a comprehensive assessment of the industry and market trends, we identified overarching goals and prioritized them based on impact and feasibility.

The final plan was then reviewed and approved by the board of directors and key stakeholders.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were established to measure outcomes and adapt strategies as needed. The process resulted in a strategic plan that is rooted in a shared vision, supported by informed strategies, and poised to guide BTM towards a vibrant and successful future in its 45th season and beyond.

Mission

Ballet Theatre of Maryland's mission is to provide Maryland with a fully professional ballet company and training academy that meets the aesthetic and recreational needs of Maryland through expressive movement by:

- Performing known and original classical and contemporary works of artistic integrity;
- Creating new eclectic works that express both American and Maryland culture;
- Educating the community by providing a complete training program as well as other services that make the ballet more accessible to the under-served;
- Preserving the tradition of the classical form, while promoting the continual evolution of dance as an art.

Areas of Focus

Led by the organizational mission, the Ballet Theatre of Maryland's strategic plan encompasses several key areas of focus, aimed at driving artistic excellence, community engagement, and organizational sustainability. The plan highlights the following key areas:

1. Community Outreach

The strategic plan underscores the company's commitment to being a cultural catalyst within the community. It seeks to strengthen ties by offering educational programs, workshops, and outreach activities that promote ballet appreciation, nurture talent, and inspire the next generation of dancers and arts enthusiasts.

Recognizing the strength of collaborations, the plan encourages forging strategic partnerships with other local arts organizations, educational institutions, and community stakeholders. It seeks to leverage collective expertise, resources, and networks to create impactful initiatives and strengthen the overall arts ecosystem.

2. Professional Performances

Emphasizing innovation and creativity, the strategic plan aims to curate captivating performances that push boundaries, showcase diverse styles, and inspire audiences. It focuses on selecting compelling repertoire, commissioning new works, and nurturing collaborations with renowned choreographers and artists.

Recognizing the importance of expanding and diversifying our audience, the plan prioritizes initiatives to engage new demographics, reach underserved communities, and enhance accessibility. It includes targeted marketing campaigns, strategic partnerships, and audience enrichment programs to foster deeper connections with ballet enthusiasts and newcomers alike.

3. Conservatory Training

Emphasizing high-quality instruction, the strategic plan commits the BTM Conservatory to nurturing the artistic and technical growth of students through comprehensive training and performance opportunities in a supportive learning environment that is open to and accessible by all.

And then in order to best serve and implement each of the above:

4. Organizational Advancement

The plan places significant emphasis on securing the financial and physical resources and operational stability necessary for long-term success of the organization and our mission. It includes strategies to diversify funding sources and leadership voices, cultivate donor relationships, and optimize internal processes to ensure fiscal responsibility and efficient operations.

Community Outreach

BTM currently engages in many activities and partners with diverse organizations to help achieve our mission of offering community outreach access and engagement opportunities. We work with The Boys and Girls Club, the Casey Cares Foundation, GiGi's Playhouse, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Anne Arundel County Public Libraries, the Anne Arundel County Police Department, the Anne Arundel County Public Schools, the Housing Authority of the City of Annapolis, the Fenwick Foundation, the Inner West Street Association, and others to engage more of our community and offer everyone accessible arts programming.

This strategic plan desires to preserve and strengthen these relationships and the synergies they create as we seek to:

- Develop and implement outreach programs that bring arts education and experiences to underserved communities, schools, and community centers.
- Collaborate with local organizations and institutions to design workshops, demonstrations, and interactive sessions that introduce diverse audiences to the beauty and benefits of the arts.
- Organize and participate in community performances, free or low-cost events, and festivals to make the arts accessible to a wider audience.
- Offer educational and community-based initiatives that increase access to the arts for individuals who may face barriers or have limited exposure to artistic opportunities.
- Seek partnerships with local venues, cultural festivals, and community events to showcase the artform and our organization, fostering community pride and engagement.
- Establish strategic partnerships and collaborations with schools, universities, and other community organizations to enhance arts education offerings and provide valuable resources.
- Collaborate with other local artists, musicians, and performers to create multidisciplinary experiences that showcase the intersections of different art forms and foster a sense of artistic community
- Develop initiatives to make the arts more accessible to individuals with disabilities, ensuring inclusive programming, facilities, and resources.
- Work closely with accessibility organizations to implement accommodations, such as audio description, sign language interpretation, and sensory-friendly performances, to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

Measurement and Evaluation:

- Track and analyze attendance and participation rates in community outreach programs and events.
- Conduct surveys and feedback sessions to gather insights from participants and community members.
- Monitor the impact of outreach initiatives on community engagement, awareness, and perceptions of the organization.
- Assess the success of collaborations and partnerships through qualitative and quantitative measures, evaluating the breadth and depth of engagement achieved.

By implementing this community outreach and engagement strategy, we aim to forge strong connections with the local community, nurture a passion for the arts, and create a lasting impact by making the arts accessible to all. Through meaningful partnerships, education, and engaging events, we strive to enrich lives, foster creativity, and cultivate a vibrant arts ecosystem that benefits both the Ballet Theatre of Maryland and the community we serve.

Professional Performances

Ballet Theatre of Maryland produces high-quality professional productions that captivate audiences, showcase artistic excellence, and contribute to the cultural landscape.

To continue to excel at this aspect of our mission we seek to:

- Curate a repertoire that balances classical masterpieces, contemporary works, and innovative productions, reflecting artistic diversity and pushing artistic boundaries that aligns with the mission of the organization and resonates with diverse audiences.
- Maintain high production standards in all aspects, including choreography, set design, costumes, lighting, and sound, ensuring an immersive and memorable experience for the audience.
- Attract and retain exceptional dancers and artistic personnel through competitive compensation, professional development opportunities, and a supportive working environment.
- Foster a culture of continuous learning and growth, providing resources and mentorship to nurture the artistic development of performers and production staff.
- Forge collaborations and partnerships with other arts organizations and performance venues to enhance the quality and reach of professional productions.
- Explore intra- and interdisciplinary collaborations to create unique and boundary-pushing productions that merge different artistic styles, perspectives, and artforms.
- Develop targeted marketing and outreach strategies to reach existing and new audiences, engaging them through compelling storytelling, innovative promotional campaigns, and accessible ticketing options.
- Develop programming and performances that reflect and celebrate the cultural diversity of the community.
- Develop even better ways to serve audiences who can't make it to the theater through improved streaming and digital productions.
- Enhance audience experiences through pre- and post-show events, educational programs, and interactive opportunities that deepen their connection with the productions and the art form.

Measurement and Evaluation:

- Monitor attendance and ticket sales to gauge audience response and demand for productions.
- Conduct audience surveys and feedback collection to assess satisfaction levels and gather insights for improvement.
- Evaluate press reviews, industry recognition, and awards received to gauge artistic excellence and impact.
- Track financial performance, including production budgets, revenue generation, and cost efficiency, to ensure financial sustainability.

By executing this strategic plan for professional productions, we aim to grow our reputation for artistic excellence, inspire and captivate audiences, and contribute to the cultural landscape. Through a combination of artistic vision, production excellence, talent development, collaborations, and audience engagement, we will create memorable experiences that resonate with audiences and strengthen the organization's position as a leading producer of professional dance productions.

Conservatory Training

The Ballet Theatre of Maryland Conservatory is driven by BTM's mission to provide a complete dance training program, comprehensive of beginner and professional. The strategic plan for the conservatory centers around key focus areas that aim to foster a nurturing environment for artistic growth, provide exceptional training, and cultivate a welcoming community of young artists. To achieve this:

- The conservatory prioritizes the artistic development of its students, providing comprehensive training and opportunities for growth in various artistic disciplines. Through rigorous curricula, masterclasses, and performance opportunities, the conservatory aims to cultivate technical proficiency, artistic expression, and a lifelong love for the arts.
- The plan emphasizes a commitment to excellence in training, focusing on high-quality instruction and pedagogy. The conservatory employs experienced, professional faculty who are dedicated to nurturing the unique talents of each student, fostering a welcoming and supportive learning environment, and instilling discipline, creativity, and a strong work ethic.
- Attract and retain exceptional instructors through competitive compensation, professional development opportunities, and a supportive working environment.
- Providing meaningful performance opportunities is a key aspect of the plan. The conservatory offers regular recitals, showcases, and ensemble performances, allowing students to apply their skills and gain valuable stage experience. Performance opportunities in BTM Professional Company performances further enhance and broaden students' artistic horizons.
- The conservatory will continue the longstanding policy of never turning down a student because of an inability to pay tuition. Scholarships break down financial barriers and ensure that talented individuals, regardless of their economic background, have the opportunity to pursue their artistic aspirations. By offering scholarships, the conservatory opens doors for students who may not have otherwise been able to afford a high-quality arts education. This fosters inclusivity, diversity, and equal access to the transformative power of the arts.
- Continue to expand adaptive dance classes and opportunities to make more of BTM Conservatory programming accessible to and inclusive of people with emotional, intellectual, and physical disabilities.
- The conservatory recognizes that students and artists have a wide range of artistic interests and aspirations. By expanding and diversifying its offerings, the conservatory can cater to a broader spectrum of artistic aesthetics and goals. By embracing a broader range of dance styles the conservatory can nurture a dynamic and inclusive artistic environment and prepare students for the evolving dance world. This ensures that students have access to comprehensive training and educational opportunities that align with their individual artistic passions, and align with our mission, and goals of growth, innovation, and meeting the diverse needs of students and the arts community.

Measurement and Evaluation:

- Use qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, focus groups, interviews, and performance evaluations, to gather feedback from students, faculty, parents, and other stakeholders.
- Track student enrollment and engagement.
- Conduct periodic impact assessments to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the strategic plan in achieving its intended outcomes and objectives.

Organizational Advancement

In order to strengthen BTM operations and enable even better programmatic efforts, we have identified several key areas related to organizational advancement and development which we wish to strategically address. By implementing this plan we will enhance overall efficiency, financial sustainability, and leadership effectiveness.

Fundraising:

- Develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy to cultivate relationships with individual donors, corporate sponsors, and foundations.
- Identify funding priorities and create compelling cases for support to attract financial contributions.
- Establish stewardship programs to engage and recognize donors, fostering long-term relationships and donor loyalty.
- Conduct regular evaluations of fundraising efforts to assess their effectiveness and adjust strategies as needed.

Administration:

- Establish policies and practices that promote equal opportunities, fairness, and inclusivity in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and decision-making processes.
- Streamline administrative processes and systems to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
- Develop clear policies and procedures for key administrative functions, including for box office, finance, community outreach, and marketing.
- Invest in professional development and training for administrative staff to foster a high-performing and collaborative work environment.
- Implement technology solutions to improve administrative workflows and data management.

Facilities:

- Assess current facilities and identify any necessary improvements or expansions to support our programs and operations.
- Develop a comprehensive facilities plan that addresses future infrastructure needs, including performance spaces, rehearsal studios, classrooms, and administrative areas.
- Seek additional partnerships and collaborations with other community organizations or institutions to optimize the use of facilities and leverage shared resources.

Board Governance:

- Establish a stronger and more diverse board of directors that reflects the community's expertise, networks, and commitment to the BTM's mission.
- Define clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations for board members, ensuring active engagement and accountability.
- Continue to foster a culture of transparency, ethical conduct, and fiduciary responsibility within the board.
- Regularly assess the board's composition, effectiveness, and performance, making adjustments to ensure strategic alignment and effective governance.

These key elements of the strategic plan related to fundraising, administration, facilities, and board governance provide a framework for BTM to strengthen our financial sustainability, enhance operational efficiency, optimize our physical resources, and ensure effective leadership and governance. By addressing these areas, the Ballet Theatre of Maryland can create a solid foundation to support our artistic mission, educational programs, and ensure long-term sustainability and success.

Conclusion

The strategic plan outlined encompasses a comprehensive roadmap for success, ensuring BTM's growth, artistic excellence, and community impact. With a strong focus on artistic programming, audience development, community outreach, talent cultivation, organizational sustainability, and collaboration, the plan sets the stage for a vibrant and prosperous future. For nearly 45 years, Ballet Theatre of Maryland has maintained a reputation for high-quality artistic productions, extensive community involvement, beneficial educational programming, and financial prudence and fiduciary responsibility; through the dedicated implementation of this strategic plan, BTM hopes to be able to serve our community even better.

Through meticulous planning and a collaborative approach, the strategic plan leverages the collective expertise and input from stakeholders at all levels, ensuring a shared vision and commitment to achieving the organization's goals. The plan emphasizes the importance of innovation, inclusivity, and adaptability in navigating the evolving landscapes faced by nonprofit arts organizations. By engaging and dialoging with audiences, donors, and community leaders and members, we will create an array of rich, effective, and sustainable programs which will strengthen our organization and enhance the community we serve.

By prioritizing artistic development, the plan aims to showcase captivating performances, pushing boundaries and inspiring audiences. The focus on audience development and community engagement seeks to expand and diversify the organization's reach, making ballet accessible to a wider audience and fostering a sense of cultural belonging. By producing more and better, vibrant, and engaging artistic and educational programming and by making it more accessible to more people BTM will play an important role in shaping the future of the cultural landscape to one that is more accepting, diverse, representative, and inclusive.

The strategic plan also recognizes the significance of talent cultivation, providing opportunities for growth and fostering a supportive environment for emerging artists. Through competitive pay and contract terms, we will attract the best talents to share their skills, knowledge, and abilities with our audiences, students, and community.

Furthermore, the plan highlights the value of collaboration and partnerships, forging alliances with local arts organizations, educational institutions, and community stakeholders. These partnerships amplify the impact of the organization's initiatives and create a vibrant arts ecosystem. By partnering with community organizations and other arts groups, we will provide accessible opportunities for everyone in the community to participate in and benefit from our resources and efforts.

By prioritizing organizational sustainability, the plan ensures responsible financial management, efficient operations, accountable private and corporate donor cultivation, and strengthened governance and support, laying a solid foundation for long-term success.

With measurement and evaluation mechanisms in place, the strategic plan will continuously track progress, measure outcomes, and adapt strategies as needed, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and learning.

Overall, the strategic plan reflects the Ballet Theatre of Maryland's commitment to artistic excellence, community engagement, and organizational sustainability and growth. It sets a clear direction, outlining actionable steps that will guide the organization towards a vibrant and successful future. With the implementation of this strategic plan, the Ballet Theatre of Maryland is poised to achieve its mission, to enrich lives, to contribute to the cultural landscape, and be recognized as an organization using the art of ballet for the benefit of all for generations to come.