



MORDANCE

Annual Report

2023

Creating a more inclusive landscape
for the future of ballet

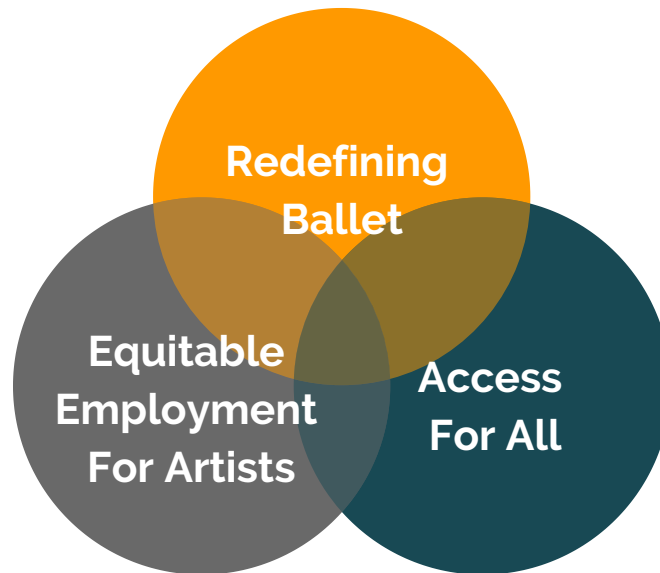
MorDance is a trailblazing, women-led ballet company striving to advance accessibility, diversity, and creativity in ballet by fostering empowered environments for artistic expression.

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MorDance's overall vision is embodied through



Redefining Ballet

MorDance believes that dance has the capacity to express and negotiate complex contemporary issues surrounding race, gender, and the environment through its unique power to transcend language. Our repertoire transforms themes of activism and humanity into captivating movement, inspiring audiences to become more civically engaged and socially responsible. We are dedicated to reimagining the ballet artform as a vessel of learning and impactful change.

Access For All

MorDance's commitment to making dance accessible to all is present throughout the organization including our historically low ticket prices, free annual student performance, and youth workshops serving economically under-resourced districts across New York City.

Equitable Employment for Artists

MorDance simply would not exist without our artists. From breathtaking performances to immersive in-school workshops, our artists inspire awe and encourage creative expression across audiences. MorDance is committed to employing dancers, musicians, composers, and designers from diverse backgrounds and identities who have been historically marginalized in the field of ballet. Together, we stand as advocates for equal opportunity and representatives of a more dynamic future for the performing arts.



Dear Friends and Supporters of MorDance,

As we reflect on the extraordinary artistic journey of MorDance throughout 2023, my heart swells with immense pride and gratitude for the incredible strides we have collectively achieved. This year has been a testament to transformative growth, marked by profound creative exploration, heightened community engagement, and a significant milestone—the relocation of MorDance to Yonkers in January of 2024.

In our monumental tenth season, MorDance garnered critical acclaim, forged impactful artistic collaborations, and significantly expanded our programming, particularly with under-resourced youth. Our strategic decision to relocate MorDance to Yonkers has been fueled by a desire to build upon this impact, connect with new audiences, and contribute to the vibrant cultural tapestry of the city of Yonkers. Our new home will

provide a platform to reach broader audiences, fostering the freedom to create unencumbered in our dedicated space. This move will also open avenues for increased performance and event opportunities, as well as the expansion of our outreach programs to include tuition-free after-school dance programs for under-resourced youth.

MorDance's aspirations for the upcoming year are nothing short of ambitious. We are poised to unveil an expanded and captivating programming lineup, promising our audiences an immersive and unforgettable ballet experience. In collaboration with the Hudson River Museum as the Spring/Summer 2024 Teaching Artist In Residence, MorDance eagerly anticipates participating in multiple public events and performances inspired by the exhibition Rivers Flow/Artists Connect.

MorDance will kick off its first Yonkers performance season from April 30 to May 4, followed by its long-standing NYC season at New York Live Arts in Manhattan. It symbolizes a new era of artistic exploration, heightened community engagement, and the fulfillment of our mission to make dance accessible to all. We are opening our rehearsals to the public regularly in Yonkers and envision launching a series of free outdoor performances in the summer of 2024. MorDance is thrilled to extend its outreach programs into the Yonkers and Westchester communities while maintaining our current initiatives in NYC. MorDance's unwavering commitment to accessibility and outreach remains a driving force in our journey. I express my deepest gratitude to each one of you for being integral to MorDance's ongoing success. Your support—whether through attending performances, engaging in our outreach programs, or contributing to our mission—fuels our passion and propels us forward.

Thank you for steadfastly believing in the transformative power of dance and the arts. Here's to a year of boundless creativity, collaborative endeavors, and a stronger sense of community as we collectively redefine the cultural landscape.

With heartfelt appreciation,
Morgan McEwen

Youth engagement begins with the opportunity for personal discovery, wonderment, and meaningful experiences. MorDance knows that the confidence imparted by dance opens doors to success in the arts and beyond.





Polina Nazaykinskaya



Becky Hiesler



Emily Cardea



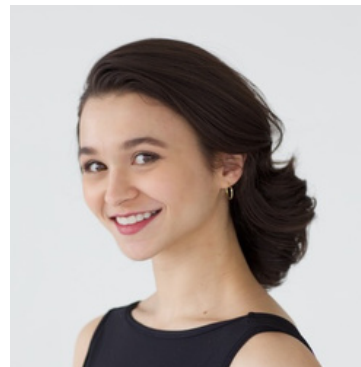
Ayaka Kamei



David Hochberg



Tevin Johnson



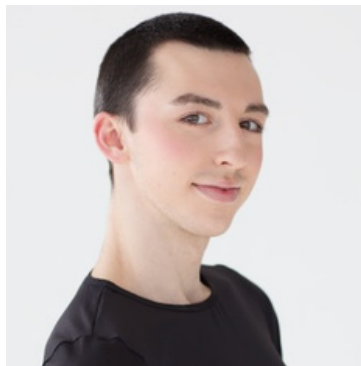
Camila Rodrigues



Lauren Treat



Claire van Bever



Joe LaLuzerne



Dustin James

What

MorDance is a trailblazing, women-led ballet company striving to advance accessibility, diversity, and creativity in ballet by fostering empowered environments for artistic expression. Since launching in 2013, we have embodied our mission to break free of ballet's historically homogenous structures by creating groundbreaking original works, centering underrepresented voices and contemporary narratives, and leading youth outreach initiatives serving thousands of students in under-resourced communities across New York City.

Why

As reported by a study funded by the National Endowment for The Arts, empirical evidence supports claims that engaging with art is essential to the human experience. Among adults, arts participation is related to behaviors that contribute to the health of civil society such as increased civic engagement, greater social tolerance, and reductions in other-regarding behavior.

A 2019 study conducted by the Brookings Institution and Houston's Arts Access Initiative found that a substantial increase in arts educational experiences among students has a remarkable impact on students' academic, social, and emotional outcomes. Relative to students assigned to the control group, treatment school students experienced a 3.6 percentage point reduction in disciplinary infractions, an improvement of 13 percent of a standard deviation in standardized writing scores, and an increase of 8 percent of a standard deviation in their compassion for others. In terms of measuring compassion for others, students who received more arts education experiences were more interested in how other people feel and more likely to want to help people who are mistreated.

How

MorDance serves a vibrant community of art enthusiasts across New York City representing an array of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Our commitment to accessibility encapsulates a wide audience from long-standing patrons of ballet to those who have yet to be introduced to the genre. We are able to reach under-resourced populations through a strong network of outreach partners that have been consistently expanding since our launch. We are proud to partner with longstanding community organizations and public institutions serving marginalized, disenfranchised, and at-risk youth. In 2022, MorDance worked with eleven organizations including STEM From Dance, Bronx Academy of Music, Ballet and Beyond, PS 23, Ps 127, and PS 110 who are essential in facilitating our youth outreach initiatives.

MorDance believes that achieving artistic excellence is not only to combine technical prowess with innovative expression but to consistently articulate beyond words a notion that is deeply felt, no matter the background or lived experience of the spectator. Our works of ballet compassionately welcome viewers into each story. Every year MorDance moves towards the goal of artistic excellence through our capacity to engage, inspire, and empower a diversity of audiences.

IN-SCHOOL STUDENT WORKSHOPS

At MorDance, we are committed to fostering a truly inclusive landscape for ballet and the performing arts. We recognize that to achieve this, it is essential to nurture the creative expression of young individuals who face barriers to accessing the arts. We firmly believe that youth engagement starts with providing opportunities for personal discovery, igniting a sense of wonder, and facilitating meaningful experiences. By empowering young people to explore their artistic potential, we aim to cultivate a generation that values diversity, embraces creativity, and contributes to the vibrant tapestry of the arts.

Students Served During In-School Workshops

	Students served (grades k-5)	Students living below federal poverty line	Students with learning disabilities	Minority students
In-School Programs	800	31%	24%	99%



Top photo - students at PS 23 in the Bronx creating their own dance led by the dancers of MorDance
Bottom photo - students at PS 127 in Queens clap as the dancers of MorDance perform

STUDENT MATINEE

MorDance achieved a remarkable milestone at our annual free student performance at the Gerald Lynch Theater, with a record attendance of over 500 students and teachers. The feedback we received from both students and teachers about the profound impact of this performance has been truly extraordinary.



Grades 3-5

Number of Schools 5

Number of Students 510

NYC public school students watching MorDance on April 27th at Gerald W Lynch Theater

- **Watching dance performances with storylines like this can bring people together, because people can talk about the message behind the dances.**
-Jacqueline, 4th grader
- **We can use social issues and make art out of it to make people aware about what is happening around us. In the performance they did this with recycling and women's rights.**
-Renesme, 4th grader
- **It was a really great experience and we were so grateful for this opportunity.**
-Melissa Silverberg, 4th grade teacher
- **I felt happy while watching the dance performance, because I knew that I could do something like that when I get older if I work hard at it.**
-Valentina, 4th grader
- **It was nice to see the dance show because I saw people from different countries or races and it was nice to see everyone together working for the same thing.**
-Joseph, 4th grader

This program was specifically designed to enrich students' experiences with the arts in New York City. It featured two captivating ballets—one addressing the urgent issue of plastic pollution's impact on the albatross population, and the other inspired by the profound works of Emily Dickinson. These thought-provoking performances offered a powerful and engaging experience for the students.

We were fortunate to have Vicki Ferrini, a geoscientist from Columbia University's Lamont Center, as our special guest speaker. Her enlightening discussion on climate justice and her ongoing global ocean floor mapping project created a meaningful connection to our ballet about the albatross. Additionally, the students had the opportunity to observe our dedicated stage crew in action, enjoy live music, and actively engage in discussions with the entire MorDance team. Through dance, we have witnessed time and time again the transformative power it holds in building confidence and opening doors to success in the arts and beyond.

PUBLIC PERFORMANCES



"If "Emily" isn't a masterpiece, at least one appropriate to my description of the company... it's pretty close: it's the finest McEwen-choreographed dance that I've seen to date."

"...every facet of the dances comes together brilliantly."

"McEwen presents imagery of the albatross compellingly, perhaps the finest example of bird or flight simulation that I've seen, visually as well as choreographically."

"Based on those pieces I've seen, McEwen doesn't choreograph to music for the sake of choreographing to music. While her dances may, and usually do, amplify whatever score is being used, they're more than efforts to visualize it. Her choreography usually has an apparent purpose beyond that, one that she often makes quite clear even before the dance begins."

"her (Polina Nazaykinskaya) score for "Emily" is a step, or a note, above: it's an intriguing, entertaining, and melodic piece of contemporary classical music"

"Emily" is a lovely dance that grips the viewer immediately and never lets go. There's a pulse and flow to it, a consequence both of the music and choreography, that's reflected in the visual dynamic of every company member. This is true for the other two dances on the program as well"

-Jerry Hochman of "Critical Dance



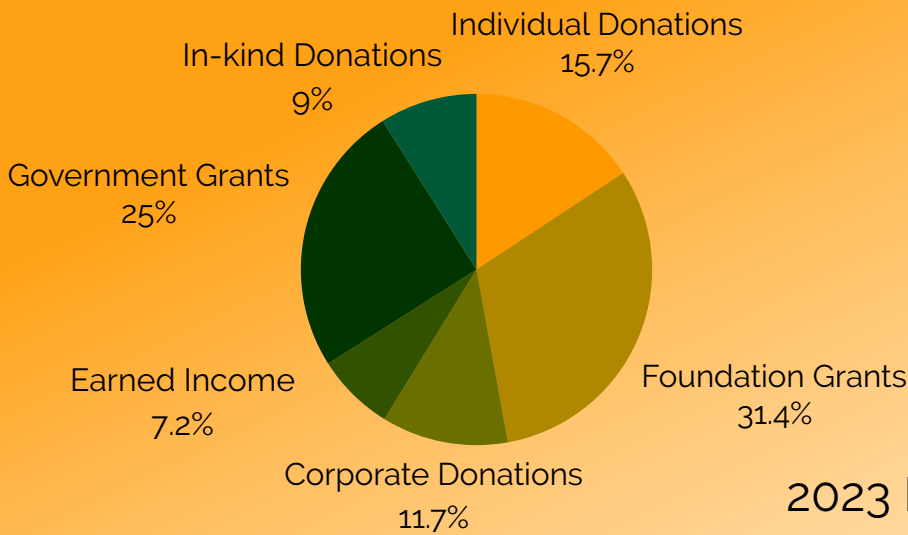
"As a female founder and artistic director in a field dominated by male voices in leadership roles, it has always been my goal to celebrate and support underrepresented voices and perspectives. Dance has the great potential to explore challenging topics with a sensitivity that cannot be expressed by words alone. I feel that every ballet we create is an opportunity to use our platform for dialogue, education, and awareness."

-Artistic Director Morgan McEwen

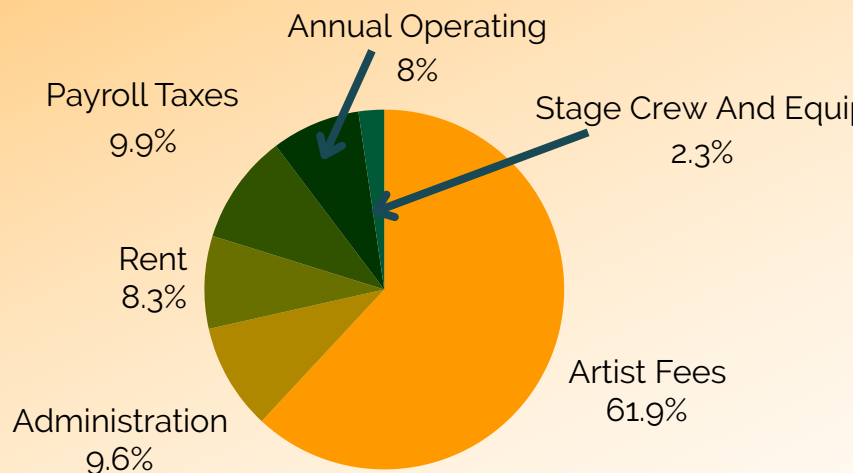


	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue	\$62,315	\$40,607	\$69,561	\$128,521	\$192,970
YoY Change	↑ 14%	↓ 35%	↑ 71%	↑ 85%	↑ 45%
Expenditures	\$68,644	\$23,748	\$49,889	\$145,090	\$187,848
Funds Balance	\$934	\$17,793	\$37,465	\$20,896	\$26,018

2023 Revenue Breakdown



2023 Expenditure Breakdown





MorDance extends special thanks to these supporters:



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Michael Sperling
Lauren Stiroh
Karen Su
Evelyn Swaim
Scott Turner
Peter Van Bever
Victoria Williams

Support from our donors and sponsors helps to ignites our team of artists, outreach programs, and performances all year long.

MorDance's conception of artistic excellence is inseparable from its commitment to accessibility and creativity. To achieve artistic excellence is not only to combine technical prowess with innovative expression, but to consistently articulate beyond words a notion that is deeply felt, no matter the background or lived experience of the spectator.





Morgan McEwen
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