



Abilities Dance



Image by Bill
Parsons/Maximal Image

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Reader:

As we all know, 2020 was quite the year. With the global pandemic and racial reckoning, we all took a moment to rethink our priorities while keeping our loved ones and communities safe. While the rest of the world caught up with some of us who created virtually pre-pandemic, we extended our internal practices externally by shifting our venues to virtual audiences. We gave some artists the space to focus on themselves or their outside work for part or the rest of the year for community wellness. For those who wanted to continue, we figured out with our collaborators how to refine our approaches to be able to create work from our homes or distanced in theatres. We were then booked and busy! I was thrilled to have artists grow into certain roles and take the lead on projects to highlight various leadership styles within ADB. We collaborated with exciting communities nationally and internationally to have conversations and learn from each other how we can better improve our intersectional equity practices. While there were a lot of hardships that should not be diminished, we still managed to find ways to have difficult conversations of always ensuring everyone is equitably in virtual spaces while also providing moments of artistic relief from the intense realities we're in. In February 2021, we already have one international production and several panels and lectures with many more ahead of us. We will take these moments of reflection and resilience with us as we continue to heal together from this pandemic and the systemic inequities we face.



Ellice Patterson

FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PROGRAMS IN 2020

Performing Company

Our performing company consists of diverse artists within and outside of the disabled community that create work for professional productions. In 2020, our company was seen at the MFA for MLK Day, our 2020 self-produced annual production “Cultivate” at the Multicultural Arts Center in Cambridge, Cambridge River Arts Stream Festival, and a debut Celebrity Series Production at the Wimberly Theatre.



Image by Bill Parsons/Maximal Image

Community Engagement

Our community engagement consists of movement workshops and/or lectures on disability culture, intersectionality, and more to various ages and communities. In 2020, Louisa Mann and Peter Trojic taught Girl Scout workshops virtually. Louisa Mann also ran a two-month Creative Movement program at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UMass Boston for mature learners. Patterson was a keynote speaker for the Berklee Able Conference and equity training hosted by Yancey Consulting. She also created a “storytelling through movement” activity in collaboration with the ICA for 500 East Boston residents that would be later expanded to over a thousand BPS students in February 2021 vacation week. Other community engagements include Northeastern, European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities, ICA, Boston City Singers, Ipay, and Opulent Mobility.



Image by Bill Parsons/Maximal Image

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2020



Image by Bill Parsons/Maximal Image



Image by the Eric Carle Museum

Performing Company

- March, 2020: Cultivate production at Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center right before we shut down
Our female and nonbinary choreographers created work inspired by a variety of movement themes and musical genres. Those that did not feel comfortable coming were sent a video link so they could still view the work.
- October, 2020: Celebrity Series of Boston production at the Wimberly Theatre
We restaged some pieces and premiered “Parallel” for a live streamed virtual audience.

Community Engagement

- Our Space Our Place: Performed a piece in our Cultivate production and started virtual work under their new instructor Kylie Sorenson to create a piece for our January 2021 piece
- International Collaborations:
 - Ellice Patterson spoke on a panel in October 2020 at the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities
 - Patterson gave a lecture in Summer 2020 for the University of Peradeniya’s Arts and Disability course that later led to a months long collaboration and virtual production premiering January, 2021

STORIES

"I've grown [while working with Abilities Dance Boston] because I have seen the potential of expanding the expanding basis for who is a dancer and expanding the basis for who can dance and who we are going to accept as a dancer on stage. I am very much an advocate for the inclusion of all body types and mind types in dance and in the media in general and in the arts in general and this project has allowed me to put my money where my mouth is and to really try to be as supportive and as constructive as I can in this process of bringing to life these really phenomenal pieces."

- Rob Gross, Composer

"Being part of Abilities I have really come to appreciate that we have opportunities beyond performing on a stage to expand our artistry, I've been able to teach, I've been able to choreograph. I've even learned how to create audio descriptions for my choreography and I feel like all those things are just helping me grow and [strengthen] my artistry. One of my favorite moments with Abilities was this past March we had a performance right before everything started to shut down and with all the uncertainty that was arising, the fact that we were able to come together and share the performance that we had been working so hard on really just speaks volumes to the sense of community that Abilities has created."

-Louisa Mann, Choreographer, Dancer, Teacher

"One of the ways I've grown [since working with Abilities Dance Boston] is I've become a much more active participant and user of audio descriptions as someone who is blind myself I have always really enjoyed attending performances that contain audio descriptions but I was always experiencing them in a rather passive way but since I've been helping Ellice and the rest of the team edit the audio descriptions for the dance performances I've really become a lot more active in the way that I think about description and in the way that I choose words or phrases or make recommendations about words or phrases to really give the listener a very clear idea of what is happening..."

- Amber Percy, Audio Descriptions Editor

"I have been working with Abilities since the summer of 2018, when I approached Ellice to volunteer while I was in graduate school for occupational therapy. Abilities shared my passions of dance and spreading inclusivity within the arts and beyond, so I knew I had to become involved in some way. I started off volunteering to do administrative tasks for the company, and in 2020 I was able to participate in a virtual performance opportunity and actually dance with the company. I am so thankful for all that Abilities has taught me about making the arts more accessible to all, through writing audio descriptions to providing alternative text on photos. I am excited to continue learning from my involvement in Abilities for years to come!"

- Lauren Compton, Dancer, Admin Volunteer

DEMOGRAPHICS: COMPANY

People of color **48%**

LGBTQ* **29%**

Immigrants or first
generation U.S. Citizens **29%**

Women or non-binary **80%**

People with disabilities **52%**

SUPPORTERS AND FUNDERS

The Boston Foundation



Boston Cultural Council

**BOSTON CULTURAL
COUNCIL**

*We award grants that help artists and arts
organizations thrive.*

Cambridge Arts Council

CAMBRIDGE | ARTS

Mass Cultural Council - 2020 UP Award



Haymarket Covid-19 Urgent Response Grant



New England Foundation For The Arts



City of Boston Arts and Culture COVID-19 grant

CITY of BOSTON

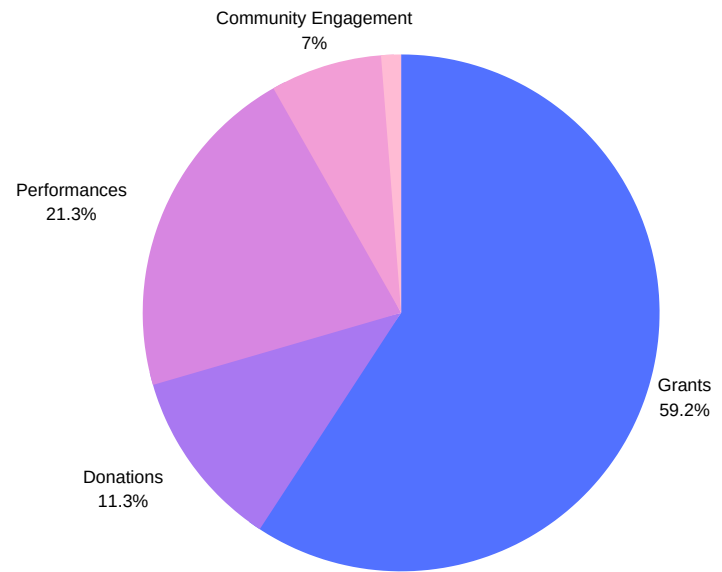
Thank you to all of our wonderful supporters and funders!

FINANCIALS

*Operating income and expenses for the year 2020

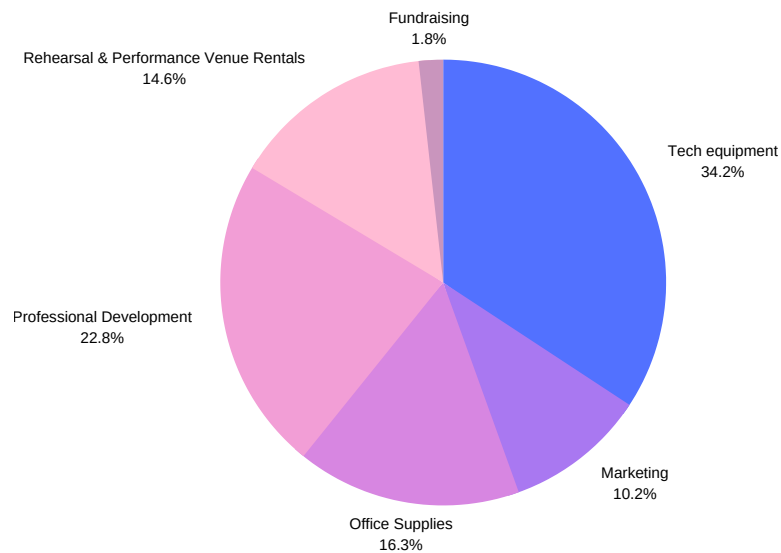
Revenue

Grants	\$23,550.00
Donations	\$4,498.98
Performances	\$8,456.14
Community Engagement	\$2,780.00
Misc.	\$494.36
TOTAL REVENUE	\$39,770.48



Expenses

Artist and Admin Honorarium	\$24,710.00
Technical Equipment	\$2,892.36
Marketing	\$865.22
Office Supplies	\$1,376.24
Professional Development	\$1,926.65
Rehearsals and Performance Venue Rentals	\$1,236.00
Fundraising	\$149.00
Travel	\$3,084.55
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$36,240.02



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ellice Patterson

Executive Director

Nicole Agois Hurel

Chair

Dr. Lauren Elson

Member

Nicole Triplett

Member

Nicole Harrison

Member

CONTACT INFORMATION



Abilities Dance



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