



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Executive Director

Atlanta Ballet

Atlanta, Georgia

The oldest continuously operating ballet company in America, the largest self-supported arts organization in Georgia, and the official Ballet of Georgia.

The Opportunity

This is a defining moment for Atlanta Ballet – and a rare opportunity for a leader to help secure the future of a world-class institution.

Atlanta Ballet has achieved extraordinary artistic stature, earning its place as one of the nation’s leading and most respected ballet companies while contributing meaningfully to Atlanta’s cultural identity. Strong artistic leadership is firmly in place. The opportunity now is to build on that foundation with an Executive Director who is the right leader for this time – a complementary business partner to the Artistic Director who brings strength in operational leadership, financial stewardship, and institutional vision.

This role is grounded in Atlanta Ballet’s long standing tradition of shared leadership, with the Executive Director working in close partnership with the Board Chair and Artistic Director as a critical leadership team.

As the organization approaches its Centennial in 2029, Atlanta Ballet stands at an inflection point – one marked by exceptional artistic momentum and the clear imperative to strengthen financial stability, operational rigor, and institutional sustainability. This next chapter calls for a leader who understands that world-class artistry demands – and depends upon – world-class operational excellence, and that sustainability and creativity are inseparable.

Atlanta Ballet is not seeking merely to endure, but to thrive – financially, operationally, and reputationally – so it can continue to develop extraordinary artists across the generations, inspire creators, and thrill audiences with uncompromising excellence.

What makes this opportunity exceptional is not only the challenge, but the timing. Very few leaders are entrusted with guiding an organization

Sustaining Atlanta Ballet into the Future.



Click [here](#) for a message from Nancy Field, J.D., Chair, Board of Trustees



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to its 100th year – and fewer still are invited to help shape how that milestone will be marked and remembered. The period leading to Atlanta Ballet’s Centennial offers a powerful platform for alignment: between artistic excellence and long-term sustainability, between legacy and relevance, between community pride and responsible stewardship. With audiences returning and growing, the Centennial can serve as a catalyst to deepen engagement with donors, patrons, civic leaders, and the broader community, reaffirming why Atlanta Ballet matters today and ensuring its excellence endures for generations to come.

The work ahead is significant, but so too is the opportunity: to stabilize and strengthen the institution financially while honoring its people, history, values, and artistic ambition, and to help launch the next century of excellence for Atlanta Ballet.

About Atlanta Ballet

Founded in 1929, [Atlanta Ballet](#) is the oldest continuously operating ballet company in the United States and one of Atlanta’s most enduring cultural institutions. With a legacy rooted in artistic leadership and civic engagement, Atlanta Ballet is a cultural cornerstone in the region that is consistently evolving while remaining deeply connected to the community it serves.

Today, Atlanta Ballet is internationally recognized for artistic excellence and innovation under the leadership of [Artistic Director Gennadi Nedvigin](#). The Company presents an eclectic repertory spanning classical masterworks, contemporary ballets, and bold new creations by many of the leading choreographers of our time. Atlanta Ballet is a resident company at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre and is beloved by generations of families for its iconic holiday tradition, The Nutcracker.

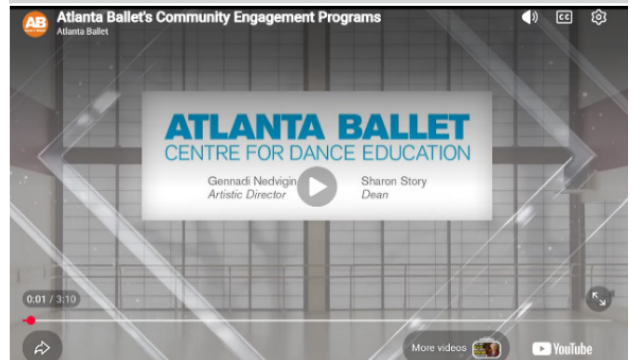
Atlanta Ballet's impact extends far beyond the stage. Under the leadership of [Dean Sharon Story](#), the [Centre for Dance Education](#) stands as one of the nation's leading dance education institutions. Serving more than 15,000 students across metro Atlanta – including over 4,000 in its training programs – the Centre prepares the next generation of professional dancers while inspiring a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

Community engagement is central to the organization's mission. Programs such as [Centre Dance](#) provide free, high-quality dance education through partnerships with schools and community organizations across the region. [Kids In Step](#) introduces thousands of students each year to ballet through school-day matinee performances. Atlanta Ballet also develops emerging talent through the [Academy](#) and [Atlanta Ballet 2](#), while expanding access through scholarships and [Decade 2 Dance](#), a signature initiative supporting Black and Brown dancers pursuing professional careers.

Together, [Atlanta Ballet's Professional Company](#), Centre for Dance Education, and community programs represent a comprehensive approach to artistry, education, and access – reflecting both the beauty of the art form and a deep commitment to serving Atlanta.

The Mandate

As Atlanta Ballet approaches its Centennial, the organization enters a period of possibility – one defined by imagination, responsibility, and resolve. With world-class artistic leadership firmly in place, growing audience engagement, and deep community roots, Atlanta Ballet can emerge from a season of financial fragility stronger, more resilient, and positioned for long-term sustainability. The next Executive Director will play a critical role



Watch to hear more about the Centre for Dance Education.



This is a moment that demands both urgency and confidence: the ability to lead decisively in the near term while keeping sight of the broader promise of Atlanta Ballet's second century.

in shaping this future – helping to stabilize the organization today while laying the foundation for ambition, access, and artistic excellence in the decades to come.

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Year 1 Priorities

Stabilize the Organization and Restore Financial Confidence

- Bring immediate clarity and discipline to cash flow management, budgeting, forecasting, and financial decision-making
- Align resources with strategic priorities and establish a credible path to sustainable operations

Assess and Accelerate Revenue and Fundraising Momentum

- Assess and strengthen the advancement function, prioritizing major gifts, institutional funding, and unrestricted operating support
- Personally engage and activate philanthropic, corporate, and foundation relationships to drive near-term revenue growth

Build Trust, Alignment, and Effective Ways of Working

- Establish a strong, productive partnership with the Board of Trustees through clear communication, transparency, and confident executive leadership
- Build a close, aligned working relationship with the Artistic Director, with shared norms for decision-making and collaboration

- Earn credibility with staff, artists, and union partners through visibility, listening, and consistent follow-through

Lead with Curiosity and Invest in Organizational Culture

- Approach the first year with a learning mindset, taking time to understand the organization's people, history, and dynamics
- Invest intentionally in culture, recognizing that trust, clarity, and shared expectations are essential to executing strategy and retaining talent

Reconnect Stakeholders to the Full Atlanta Ballet Story

- Reengage donors, patrons, and civic leaders with the power of the Company on stage and the impact of education and community programs
- Elevate Atlanta Ballet's visibility and relevance as a cornerstone cultural institution in Atlanta

Lay the Groundwork for the Centennial and the Future

- Begin shaping a realistic, values-aligned Centennial vision that serves as a catalyst for pride, investment, and longterm sustainability
- Ensure Centennial planning is grounded in fiscal responsibility while honoring legacy and future promise

Click [here](#) to access the Fiscal Years 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan

[Charity Navigator](#) awarded Atlanta Ballet with a 4-star ranking



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The Responsibilities

The Executive Director will lead Atlanta Ballet's administrative and business functions in alignment with the organization's mission and values, while partnering closely with the Artistic Director and Board of Trustees.

Strategic Leadership and Financial Stewardship

- Serve as the chief executive and steward of Atlanta Ballet, leading the organization with integrity, clarity, and a deep sense of responsibility to its artists, staff, audiences, and community
- Guide the institution through a pivotal period of renewal, ensuring alignment between mission, strategy, resources, and long-term vision, particularly as the organization approaches its Centennial
- Lead the organization toward long-term financial stability through disciplined planning, budgeting, forecasting, and revenue strategy, with an emphasis on diversified funding sources
- Honor Atlanta Ballet's history and values while positioning the organization for sustained relevance, resilience, and excellence
- Provide comprehensive oversight of financial operations, working closely with the Board, Board Finance Committee, CFO, and auditors to ensure fiscal integrity, transparency, and accountability
- Champion a culture of accountability, uncompromising excellence, and continuous improvement



This is a moment for an Executive Director who is right for the time – equipped to respond to the challenge – where financial stability, brand visibility and community impact are paramount to our present impact and future.

Development and External Relations Leadership

- Provide strategic leadership across fundraising, earned revenue, sponsorship, and contributed income, working closely with the Board and advancement team to deepen engagement and support
- Partner with the Chief Advancement Officer to design and execute a comprehensive fundraising strategy worthy of the artistic excellence it supports
- Serve as a visible and compelling ambassador for Atlanta Ballet, cultivating and stewarding strong relationships with major donors, foundations, corporations, civic leaders and partners
- Bring an undeniable sense of presence and strong relational intelligence, making powerful first impressions and cultivating enduring donor relationships that expand the donor base and inspire investment in the mission
- Diversify and grow earned and contributed revenue streams, including leadership for endowment growth
- Elevate the organization's brand visibility locally and nationally, reinforcing Atlanta Ballet's standing as a world-class arts institution
- Nurture resident partnership with Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, foundation and community partners
- Engage in local and national thought leadership to elevate the Performing Arts

Partnership with Artistic Leadership

- Function as a complementary and trusted partner to the Artistic Director, fostering a collaborative, respectful relationship grounded in shared purpose and clearly defined roles



Serving as a visible and compelling ambassador for Atlanta Ballet, cultivating and stewarding strong relationships with major donors, foundations, corporations, civic leaders and partners will be a key responsibility of the Executive Director.



- Ensure that organizational strategy, operational decisions, and financial planning actively support artistic goals and the conditions required for creative excellence
- Partner with the Artistic Director and Dean for the Centre for Dance Education to ensure resources to support and sustain community programming and student enrollment
- Champion a culture in which artistic ambition and operational discipline collaborate as full partners

Board Partnership and Governance

- Serve as the primary liaison between the Board of Trustees and the executive leadership team
- Support effective Board governance, development, and engagement
- Collaborate with the Artistic Director on labor relations and ensure compliance with collective bargaining agreements

Organizational Leadership and Culture

- Foster a workplace culture rooted in Atlanta Ballet's core values and a shared commitment to excellence
- Lead a high-performing senior leadership team, cultivating curiosity, creativity, community, and collaboration
- Support staff and artists through change with empathy, steadiness, and clear communication, transparency, and trust, recognizing people as central to the institution's success

Centennial & Future Vision

- Lead organizational planning and alignment for Atlanta Ballet's Centennial, leveraging the milestone as a catalyst for sustainability, engagement, and long-term impact

- Help define what the Centennial represents – not only as a celebration of legacy, but as a launching point for Atlanta Ballet’s next era of excellence
- Ensure that decisions made today strengthen the institution’s artistic, financial, and civic contribution for generations to come

The Relationships

Atlanta Ballet is represented not only by the dancers on stage and the staff behind the scenes, but by a deeply committed community of leaders, artists, trustees, and supporters who believe in the transformative power of dance and education. At the heart of the organization’s success is a long-standing commitment to a shared leadership model, anchored in a strong and collaborative partnership among the Board Chair, the Artistic Director, and the Executive Director.

The Executive Director reports to the [Board of Trustees](#) and works in close partnership with the Board to advance Atlanta Ballet’s mission, financial stability, and long-term strategic priorities. In collaboration with the Board Chair, the Executive Director supports effective governance, shared accountability, and thoughtful stewardship of the organization’s future.

At the same time, the Executive Director builds and sustains a strong and respectful working relationship with Artistic Director Gennadi Nedvigin. This partnership is grounded in clearly defined and complementary roles, mutual trust, and a shared commitment to artistic excellence and organizational sustainability, with each leader bringing distinct expertise to a common purpose.

The Executive Director, Artistic Director, and Board Chair consult regularly and work in close alignment on long-range planning and key policy matters, including strategic, financial, personnel, and artistic



A Collaborative Leader and Visible Ambassador

The Executive Director serves as a trusted partner to the Board of Trustees, an aligned collaborator with artistic leadership, and a visible ambassador to funders, partners, and the broader community.

Atlanta Ballet seeks an Executive Director who finds purpose and effectiveness in working through partnership – someone who values collaboration as a leadership strength and understands that the organization’s success is advanced through alignment, shared judgment, and collective responsibility.

priorities. This collaborative approach is a defining feature of how Atlanta Ballet leads – supporting trust, clarity, and sound decision-making across the institution.

Atlanta Ballet seeks an Executive Director who finds purpose and effectiveness in working through partnership – someone who values collaboration as a leadership strength and understands that the organization’s success is advanced through alignment, shared judgment, and collective responsibility. Leaders who thrive here recognize that durable impact is built through relationships and a deep respect for the contributions of fellow leaders.

The Executive Director’s direct reports include the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Advancement Officer, and Chief Marketing Officer. Through this senior team, the Executive Director ensures alignment across strategy, operations, fundraising, marketing, and finance in service of Atlanta Ballet’s artistic and educational mission. The Dean of the Centre for Dance Education, who reports to the Artistic Director, also maintains a dotted-line reporting relationship to the Executive Director to ensure alignment and engagement in the school’s growth and strategic direction.

Externally, the Executive Director serves as a visible and trusted ambassador for Atlanta Ballet, stewarding key partnerships such as the organization’s resident relationship with the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, and cultivating strong relationships with funders, civic leaders, and institutional partners. In close alignment with the Board Chair and Artistic Director, the Executive Director helps position Atlanta Ballet as a respected and mission-driven cultural leader within the region and beyond.

The Ideal Candidate

Atlanta Ballet seeks an Executive Director who is a values-driven, externally oriented business leader – someone who brings confidence, credibility, and financial rigor to their work, while holding deep respect for artistic excellence, education, and community impact. This leader understands the responsibility that comes with stewarding a century-old institution and is energized by the opportunity to help it stabilize, renew, and thrive.

The successful candidate will be a relationship-centered leader and proven revenue generator, highly regarded in the community, and trusted by partners and funders. They will lead with humility, invest in people and culture, and balance decisive action with thoughtful listening.

- A proven rainmaker with significant, demonstrated success in fundraising and revenue generation
- Strong financial, operational, and strategic leadership experience
- Deep connectivity and credibility within the Atlanta philanthropic and civic community
- A visible and engaging brand ambassador and storyteller
- Ability to partner effectively with the Board of Trustees
- Collaborative leader who builds trust and shared ways of working, especially with artistic leadership
- High emotional intelligence, integrity, and sound judgment
- A results-oriented leader who values culture as essential to strategy



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The Executive Director will have a deep understanding of the Atlanta market, including local philanthropy, civic leadership, corporate networks, and cultural institutions.

- A resilient, confident, innovative, courageous, charismatic, confident go-getter
- Energized by being out in the community engaging with people

Demonstrated Experience & Qualifications

The successful candidate will bring a proven record of senior leadership and measurable impact, with experience that reflects the scale, complexity, and significance of Atlanta Ballet at this moment.

- Demonstrated success as a senior executive (CEO, Executive Director, or comparable role) with responsibility for organizational leadership, financial oversight, and external engagement
- Deep understanding of Atlanta market, including local philanthropy, civic leadership, corporate networks, and cultural institutions
- Existing relationships within Atlanta's philanthropic, corporate, or foundation communities that can be activated early
- Experience stewarding key external partnerships and institutional relationships critical to mission delivery and revenue generation
- Significant, demonstrated success in converting prospective donors, fundraising, and generating revenue, including major gifts, institutional funding, and unrestricted operating support
- Strong financial and business acumen, with experience overseeing budgets, cash flow, forecasting, and organizational sustainability
- Excellent analytical skills and the ability to make data-informed decisions that strengthen organizational performance and strategic outcomes

- Experience working effectively with an engaged Board of Trustees, including governance partnership, trustee engagement, and strategic decision-making
- Proven ability to serve as a high-visibility leader and brand ambassador, building trust with donors, partners, civic leaders, and community stakeholders
- Experience leading and supporting senior teams across finance, advancement, marketing & public relations, and operations
- Demonstrated ability to build productive partnerships with artistic and programmatic leaders while maintaining appropriate role clarity
- Track record of navigating complex organizations through change, growth, or recovery with discipline, empathy, and credibility
- Commitment to values-driven leadership, including integrity, transparency, inclusion, and accountability
- Excellent written and verbal communications skills with the ability to inspire diverse audiences to action

Preferred Attributes

While no single candidate will embody every attribute, the following experiences and qualities are viewed as strong complements to the role:

- Comprehensive knowledge of nonprofit management and the ability to navigate political and civic relationships
- Passion for the performing arts or a demonstrated appreciation for and ability to lead within artistic environments; knowledge or background is a plus, but not required



Exceptional leaders emerge from a wide range of professional backgrounds. Atlanta Ballet welcomes diverse perspectives – from executive leaders in the arts to accomplished leaders from the corporate, philanthropic, and entertainment sectors who bring strong organizational, financial, and strategic capabilities.

- Experience operating in unionized, production-intensive environments
- Comfort balancing artistic ambition with financial and operational realities
- Experience preparing organizations for and leveraging major milestones (anniversaries, capital or endowment campaigns, strategic inflection points)

The Location

Atlanta Ballet is based in Atlanta, Georgia – a city defined by creative energy, cultural leadership, and a deep tradition of philanthropic engagement. Atlanta’s vibrant arts ecosystem, engaged civic leadership, and visible support for the arts provide a powerful platform for cultural institutions to flourish and lead.

For the next Executive Director, this is an opportunity to fully immerse in Atlanta and serve as a trusted civic and cultural leader, representing an institution that reflects the city’s creativity, diversity, and ambition.

For potential consideration
or to recommend a prospect, please email
AtlantaBalletED@BoardWalkConsulting.com
or call **Sam Pettway, Demeika Wheaton,**
or **Patti Kish**, at 404-262-7392.

Atlanta Ballet is committed to building an inclusive search process and welcomes candidates of diverse backgrounds, identities, and experiences.