CLEVELAND BALLET

CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS: MEET ELIZABETH ARNETT, CLEVELAND BALLET'S NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



HOW ARE YOU PARLAYING YOUR BACKGROUND IN THE ORCHESTRAL FIELD TO CLEVELAND BALLET?

My career has always been centered on connecting people to the transformative power of the arts. I spent over a decade working with orchestras from The Cleveland Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and later the League of American Orchestras. I've seen firsthand how powerful it is when a community invests in the arts, and how much it takes behind the scenes to sustain that kind of work. That experience gave me a deep understanding, a strong foundation, and a deep belief in what the arts can do for a city.

But this role feels personal in a different way. I trained in classical ballet, growing up, and now get to watch my own children fall in love with it through their classes at the Academy. There's something really moving about seeing it come full circle both as a parent and someone who cares deeply about the future and access of the arts here. Clevland is our chosen home. And I believe Clevelanders deserve a world-class ballet company. This work is about making that vision real and inviting others to help shape it with us.

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING?

WHY ARE THESE FUNCTIONS CRITICAL TO CLEVELAND BALLET IN SUSTAINING ITS POSITION IN NORTHEAST OHIO?

Fundraising is often thought of as the moment someone writes a check or makes a pledge. Development is everything that leads up to and follows that moment. It's the process of building relationships, listening, storytelling, and the trust built over time. It's about helping people see how their values and passions align with the mission of Cleveland Ballet. I get to connect people with the parts of our work that speak to them. Whether that's a love of ballet, a desire to support young dancers, a critically acclaimed piece, or a belief that arts are essential to a thriving community. When the connection is real, giving becomes joyful and deeply meaningful.

This work is critical because ticket sales, alone, won't sustain a ballet company. Like orchestras and theaters, ballet relies on generous support from individuals, foundations, and corporations to keep performances accessible, pay artists fairly, and offer meaningful programs across the community and in local schools. The stronger our development efforts, the more Cleveland Ballet can grow its impact in profound and lasting ways.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE DIFFERENT WAYS THAT PATRONS CAN SUPPORT CLEVELAND BALLET?

There are so many ways to support Cleveland Ballet, and truly, every single gift makes a difference. Whether you're pledging a $10 monthly donation, giving annually, sponsoring a dancer's pointe shoes, or including us in your estate plans, that support directly fuels what you see on stage and the programs we bring into schools and neighborhoods. Giving can also be as simple as adding a donation with your subscription renewal or scanning the QR code in your playbill during intermission. These small moments of generosity add up in powerful ways.

When you donate to Cleveland Ballet, you are helping to shape the future of the arts in this region. And together, we're building something that belongs to Cleveland and with that continued support, the possibilities are endless.