Atlantic Dance Theatre RECENT 20 YEARS: In 1999, Paige Whitley-Bauguess, local Baroque Dancer of international stature, was awarded a Choreographer’s Fellowship from the NC Arts Council to create an educational Baroque Dance video. Atlantic Dance Theatre partnered with Paige on the project and presented the first Baroque Arts Project (BAP) public performance in January 1999. Footage from the two public performances were used in the video which sold worldwide.

Paige became ADT Artistic Director in 2002. With multiple foundation and arts council grants, ADT presented three seasons of the Baroque Arts Project Music and Dance series. BAP, co-directed by Paige and baroque trumpeter Barry Bauguess, specialized in music and dance of the 17th and 18th centuries and core NC-based members were frequently joined by prestigious historical dance and early music artists such as dancer Thomas Baird (NYC) and musicians of Pittsburgh-based Chatham Baroque (2002 and 2005).

Paige was the 1989-91 NC Visiting Artist at Craven Community College and owned Down East Dance from 1991-2001. Two community dance groups directed by Whitley-Bauguess - the Craven Historical Dancers (adults) and The New Bern Dancing Assembly (youth) - grew out of her community activities and were regularly invited to perform at Tryon Palace for special events such as the Christmas Candlelight Tours. Paige continues to teach, direct, and perform Baroque Dance around the world as a soloist and with dance partner Thomas Baird. Then, ADT was mostly inactive until the fall of 2018.

Knowing that BAP had concerts coming up across NC, ADT decided to awaken “the sleeping beauty,” ballet pun intended, and resume the original goal of enriching culture and education in the community. In March 2019, ADT presented La Belle Danse, featuring Paige with musicians Barry Bauguess on Baroque Trumpet, John B. O’Brien on harpsichord and organ, and Brent Wissick on baroque cello and gamba. They performed in the Stanly Hall Ballroom.

Atlantic Dance Theatre EARLY YEARS: Under the leadership of Elizabeth Pope, Founder and Director from 1985-2002, Atlantic Dance Theatre presented a local concert season, toured, and was on NC Arts Council’s Touring Roster and SC Arts Commission’s Approved Artist Roster through the 1994 season. Choreographers during the period included internationally recognized artists Sal Aiello, Rick McCullough, Mark Dendy, Shirley Ririe, and others. The NC Arts Council supported ADT during this period with a variety of grants.

From 1994 to 1999, ADT served as a local service organization addressing special dance needs in the community through performances for the general public and master classes for area dance students by impressive artists and public school projects to reach underserved groups. In 1992, JT Barber Elementary School, led by Penny King, and Atlantic Dance Theatre were awarded the Governor’s Programs of Excellence in Education award for The Masters program in which students analyzed paintings and interpreted them with modern dance. This led to extensive after school dance programs and performances for JTB students as well. ADT also maintained a stage lighting package (funded by the Mary Whiting Ewing Foundation) that was made available to other groups, especially nonprofits and dance groups.