

TURNING POINTE

The Power of Dance

How your passion and appreciation provides opportunity and growth.



Ballet Arizona dancers in *Theme and Variations*. Choreography by George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.



From the main stage to classrooms across the Valley, dance continues to inspire and bring people together.

As the curtain begins to close on our 2018 – 2019 season, I am reminded about the power of dance. This spring season is an ode to that power and we begin with a celebration of George Balanchine. I am excited that we are finally bringing *Emeralds* to the Arizona stage for *All Balanchine*. This is one of Balanchine's most poetic ballets. From the choreography to the music, it is a treat for both dancers and audiences. Of course, we end the season at Desert Botanical Garden with *Eroica*. This is one of my favorite ballets that I have created and it should be even better than last year!

In this issue, Executive Director Samantha Turner talks about the impact new works have on ballet in today's world. From my artistic vision for this company, to pushing the boundaries of what ballet looks like, to expanding the number of patrons and donors, new works are a critical component to the life of a performing arts organization.

Take a look at the incredible performance opportunities provided to our students at The School of Ballet Arizona. These are opportunities that only happen because of your support and have an incredible impact on the students' education and development as dancers.

Hear from founding member and chairwoman of Ballet Arizona's Contemporary Council, Tracy Olson, about fostering a passion for and appreciation of ballet among a new generation of patrons. It is through this group of young people that we can see a glimpse of Ballet Arizona's future.

I hope you enjoy this season's final issue of *Turning Pointe*. From the main stage to classrooms across the Valley, dance continues to inspire and bring people together. Thank you for your support and for being part of our Ballet Arizona family.

Gratefully,

Ib Andersen, Artistic Director

BEHIND THE SCENES with Ib Andersen

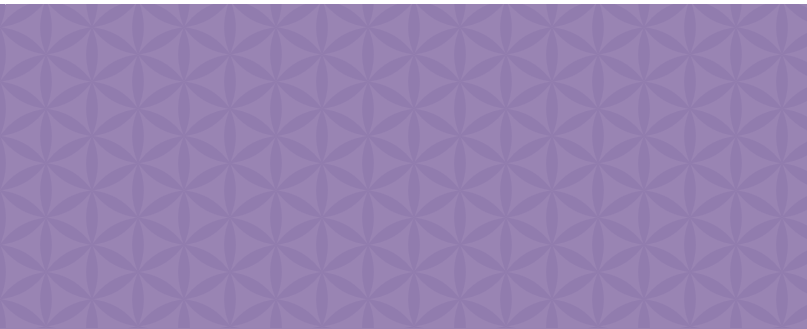
Q: What can audiences expect from the Balanchine program this year?

A: A lot of dancing! But in all seriousness, this program is very rich with three very different ballets, all having three very distinct styles.

Theme and Variations is so exciting to watch. Balanchine created this ballet in 1947 for American Ballet Theatre. It was an homage to Marius Petipa and a continuation of his old style of ballet that honors Balanchine's roots. It's his Petipa ballet. This ballet actually isn't as difficult as *Emeralds* or *Square Dance* but it certainly feels that way. When you are dancing it, you feel naked, like the audience is going to see all of your faults or missteps, it is that exposed. Part of the reason, is because Tchaikovsky's music is so grand that you feel as if you have to live up to something that you can't reach – a level of excellence that is unattainable.

I actually have a very funny story about this ballet. When I first performed in *Theme and Variations* – I was reviewed. It said something like, "when the curtain went up, Andersen looked like he got the instant flu." They could see I was so nervous, it was the first time I performed it, and I was completely freaked out. It must have shown all over my face. I will never forget that. It's one of the few reviews I actually remember. It speaks to the intensity of the ballet because as a dancer, you want to be sure you are doing it justice. After I performed it a few times, I learned it wasn't that difficult and then I enjoyed it so much more. But it was nerve-wracking.

Emeralds is the most sophisticated and mature ballets of the three and even among *Jewels* as well. It is one of his most articulated and poetic ballets. And from a dancer's point of view, this is pure bliss. I am not sure the audience really feels what the dancers feel when they perform this piece. You almost need to be a dancer to understand how truly unbelievable it is. When he choreographed it, all of the dancers thought *Emeralds* was the best. From an audience perspective, *Diamonds* and *Rubies* were the favorites. It is a very difficult ballet because it is so layered and made in the style of Paris Opera. They used to be famous for their articulation and how their bodies could speak, especially through their legs. *Emeralds* is like reading really good poetry – it is very dense and gorgeous. It requires extraordinary dancers that have complete control of their instrument. I will be curious to see how we do.



I never danced *Emeralds*, but I did *Rubies* and *Diamonds*. Balanchine taught me *Rubies* in this little closet of a studio one week before I was to perform it in Berlin. It was insane.

Q: We are so excited to see *Eroica* again. How do you feel revisiting this piece?

A: For me, it has not diminished at all since we premiered it last year. In fact, quite the opposite is happening. We have been rehearsing and I was surprised so see how this ballet was in the dancers' bodies in such a way that it was already a part of them. Because of that, I think it should be even better this time around.

This ballet is complicated, complex with many layers and many different meanings. My own interpretation of the meaning is different this year than it was the year before. Each time I see something different and it opens me up to a new interpretation. If you think you have already seen it once, you must come and see it again. There is no way that anyone could be able to really take in the nuance and the complexity in one performance.

Please come and experience it again. It will feel like the first time you have seen it. I love to visit museums time and time again. I look at the same paintings and every time I see something new. it's the same thing with this ballet. A painting is stationary but YOU are different. More so with ballet because unlike a static painting a performance will never be the same twice.

Q: Many people have called *Eroica* a "masterpiece." How does that make you feel when you hear reviews like that?

A: Don't forget that I'm an old man now, so I'm happy to hear it... it better happen before I die. I have been choreographing since I was 32, but to be quite honest, I feel like I am getting better with age. I feel more in control of what I am doing now and trust my intuition much more than I ever have. And it should be like that – I'm hoping that I don't peak until I'm 84. I was very inexperienced when I was younger and it has taken me a long time to figure myself out. That comes from experience. I used to be more critical, and I am still my own worst critic, but now I have almost run out of critiques for myself. I just want to enjoy what I'm doing in every aspect and just be! Life is too short to not enjoy what you are doing.

Enter our *Emeralds* raffle!

To celebrate the Ballet Arizona premiere of *Emeralds*, Glenna Gibbons of G.G. Gems, Inc. created this masterpiece — a one-of-a-kind designer pendant featuring two magnificent emeralds. The emeralds are connected by a line of diamonds and the pendant is suspended from an 18" platinum chain together weighing approximately 5 carats. Glenna Gibbons received her inspiration for this work of art from the romantic Parisian influence in the choreography and costumes created by the legendary George Balanchine.

Tickets are \$25 each or five for \$100. For your chance to win, please visit balletaz.org/raffle or contact Natalie Salvione at **602.343.6522** to purchase tickets by phone. *Winners do not need to be present at All Balanchine to win. Contest rules available at balletaz.org/raffle.*



This masterpiece created by **G.G. GEMS, Inc.**
Glenna Gibbons

Donor Spotlight

Tracy Olson



You are a fairly new donor to BAZ, what inspired you to give?

As an Arizona native, it is important to me to contribute my time and money to the community I cherish. As soon as I graduated from law school, I actively sought out how I could do this for Ballet Arizona.

Why do you give?

Because ballet has been a part of my life from age 3, I have a strong affinity for Ballet Arizona and its artistic vision. I love that the company brings both traditional and cutting edge pieces to the stage, making Phoenix a destination for high-quality arts.

What Ballets or contemporary works have inspired you the most?

One of my fondest childhood memories is dancing a spunky variation from *Tarantella*. This ballet was influential to me because it opened my eyes to the many dimensions of traditional ballets.

What are you most looking forward to next season?

I am most looking forward to *Napoli* next season! It is a ballet I have never seen and discovering the story of a new ballet through the dancer's movements is continually a rewarding viewing experience.

Which ballet have you enjoyed most this season and why?

It is hard to choose because I enjoyed each work for different reasons. I have an appreciation for the dancers' technical skills and artistry, and I particularly enjoyed *The Sleeping Beauty* for this reason. *The Firebird* was also a season favorite—I have never seen a ballet like it!

Any other comments you would like to contribute?

In addition to being a financial donor for Ballet Arizona, I have found the time I have donated to be personally rewarding. Specifically, I serve as the chairwoman of Ballet Arizona's Contemporary Council—a group dedicated to supporting Ballet Arizona and fostering the growth of a new generation of ballet patrons through fundraising, education, volunteering and awareness. We are a new group and are so excited for our future plans. One component of the Contemporary Council is to work with Ballet Arizona's young professionals group: Ballet Barre. This group is a phenomenal way to get to know other young professionals who also appreciate the magic and artistry of ballet, and make a few friends along the way. Ballet Barre hosts a variety of events and offers exclusive discounts and opportunities.

“As an Arizona native, it is important to me to contribute my time and money to the community I cherish.”

Foundation Highlight



Mayo Clinic is proud to be a returning medical provider for Ballet Arizona. Our team approach at Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine means expert orthopedic surgeons, primary care physicians, rehabilitation physicians, physical therapists, neurologists and radiologists are working together to care for you in our Phoenix, Scottsdale and Tempe locations.

“The athleticism of the dancers at Ballet Arizona is very comparable to the other professional athletes we care for at Mayo Clinic. We are pleased to offer the care they need to be at their best, so they can continue to deliver their beautiful art and world-class entertainment for Arizona.”

~ Dr. Anikar Chhabra

Dr. Chhabra joined Mayo Clinic in 2015 as the Director of Sports Medicine in the Department of Orthopedics. Learn more about our sports medicine program in Phoenix, and now in Tempe, at MayoClinic.org.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Samantha Turner

I hope you were able to be part of the world premiere of *The Firebird* in February. From the opening night celebration to the final performance, it was a grand experience: the excitement of something new and unexpected, the gratitude for Don and Barbara Ottosen’s generous underwriting of the work, the unfolding of Ib Andersen’s vision, and so much more.

New works are essential to the health of the ballet art form, inviting new ideas and interpretations, challenging artists mentally and physically, and keeping the art relevant in our changing world. The pairing of *The Firebird* and *La Sylphide* couldn’t have been a better opportunity to see the evolution of ballet. August Bournonville’s work, one of the oldest surviving ballets, was filled with both the traditions of classical ballet as well as one of its early evolutions – the use of pointe as a part of the story telling and not just as a physical feat. Ib Andersen’s *The Firebird* took Igor Stravinsky’s music — groundbreaking even now — and told the mythical story in a dramatic new way, combining classical choreography with contemporary ballet.

What you might not realize is that as much as new work is important to the life of the art, it is equally important to the health of the organization. For example:

- Our Prima Circle membership level grew three percent in the weeks after *The Firebird & La Sylphide*. This group of donors is the foundation of our individual support, whose annual gifts of \$1,500 or more provide nearly a third of contributions. They make our productions, school and community engagement programs possible.

- More first-time patrons attended *New Moves* last September, when Ballet Arizona presented the work of Justin Peck – 32 percent more than last season’s *Today’s Masters* production. These new patrons are future subscribers and donors, as well as enthusiastic advocates to other people who have not yet experienced the ballet.
- Subscriptions for the current season grew 12 percent and renewals for the 2019-2020 season are also coming in at a higher than historical rate. Keeping and growing relationships with the company’s most passionate supporters is the underpinning of a stable patron base.

Support of new works keeps everything about the ballet alive – the artistic vision, the dancers’ skills, the passion of long-time patrons and the curiosity of the next generation of audiences. We are grateful to the many donors who are committed to this critically important part of the ballet.

If you would like to expand your giving to support new works, I would love to share with you the many opportunities that are available.

Gratefully,

Samantha Turner, Executive Director



Ballet Arizona dancers in Ib Andersen’s *The Firebird*. Photo by Alexander Izilliev.

THE SCHOOL OF BALLET ARIZONA

As part of Ballet Arizona's mission, we believe in creating, performing and teaching outstanding classical and contemporary ballet — a belief that also holds true at The School of Ballet Arizona (SBAZ). One aspect that continues to set SBAZ apart from other dance schools in the Valley as well the country, is not only its direct relationship with a critically acclaimed professional company but the performance opportunities it provides its more than 270 students..

Each school year, SBAZ produces three performances, including two full-length storybook ballets. There are also a multitude of opportunities for students to perform with the professional company depending on the needs of the ballet. From page boys and fairy attendants in *The Sleeping Beauty* to the Swan corps in *Swan Lake*, students of all ages have the chance to step onto the big stage and perform alongside professional dancers.

To the average person outside of the dance world, this may not seem like a big deal but it is rare for a school to provide so many performance opportunities, a sentiment shared by Upper Division student Camille Sevrain. "What makes SBAZ so special are the incredible opportunities students are given," says Sevrain. "The professional dancers are so inspirational, and to be able to work beside them, under Mr. Andersen's direction, is an incredible and very special opportunity.

I don't take for granted how rare it is as a student to have this insight and professional stage experience."

Performing on stage provides a range of benefits for a student's dance education. From the further enrichment of their dance curriculum and skills, to boosting their confidence and fostering a great work ethic. It also prepares students for what life could potentially be like as a professional dancer and the demanding nature of the career.

"Having the chance to dance, rehearse and learn from the professional dancers and the company is truly a dream come true," says level 5 student Rogelio Martinez. "The feeling of dancing on the same stage as the professional company is a blessing. The company inspires me and they tell me to never give up and that I will be in their shoes one day."

This past fall, the entire school participated in the full-length production of Ib Andersen's *Swan Lake*. During the rehearsal process, students were able to learn from Andersen himself, who presided over a number of rehearsals. This spring, Upper Division students tackled Marius Petipa's famous ballet *Don Quixote* that highlighted their classical training, and this month the entire school will take to Orpheum Theatre in downtown Phoenix and perform various pieces that are focused around their yearly curriculum.



Ballet Arizona and SBAZ dancers in *Swan Lake*. Photo by Alexander Iziliaev.

Parent Perspective

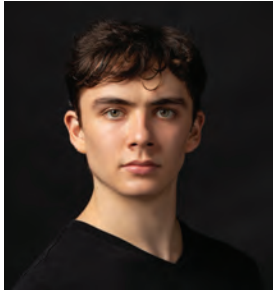
"I am so proud of my son. I see his growth and how SBAZ has encouraged him. Through hard work and dedication, he has become disciplined in not only dance but also as a better student. As a single mother and without support or encouragement from his father, it would have been impossible for me to keep my son in ballet without the help and support of SBAZ scholarship. So again I say thank you. I am truly grateful."

María Escobedo,
Mother of SBAZ student
Rogelio Martinez



Photo by Tzu Chia Huang.

COMPANY CONNECTION *Meet dancers Adrian & Abby*



Adrian Durham

Hometown: Houston, Texas
Joined Ballet Arizona: 2018

Who is your greatest dance inspiration & why?

One of my biggest inspirations in the dance world is Steven McRae, principal dancer with The Royal Ballet. He is known for his textbook ballet technique and solid work

ethic. But I've also learned to draw inspiration from the dancers around me. I'm impressed and inspired by my co-workers on a daily basis.

Do you prefer modern or classical ballet & why?

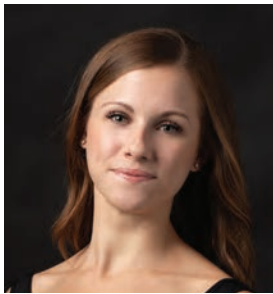
I prefer classical ballet to modern, because my training has always been centered around classical ballet. Also, the technical side of classical ballet has always made more sense to my body.

Do you have a pre-performance ritual?

I don't have any specific ritual before a performance, but I try to be well fed and caffeinated if necessary. Depending on the role, I may practice on stage or do some light exercises before the curtain goes up.

What do you do outside of dance? Do you have any hobbies?

Outside of ballet, I enjoy working out and hiking. I like challenging myself in the gym and I think it's helped me grow stronger physically and mentally. I also like to cook when I have the time and try new restaurants when I don't. It's all about balance.



Abby Phillips

Hometown: Michigan
Joined Ballet Arizona: 2018

Who is your greatest dance inspiration & why?

There is not one specific person that inspires me. I admire many dancers and try to incorporate as many aspects of their dancing into my own. But honestly, my coworkers

inspire and push me to become a better version of myself every single day!

What has been your favorite role to dance?

One of my all time favorite roles was in Stephen Mills *Red Roses*. It's a beautiful ballet with 4 couples demonstrating all of the different aspects of a relationship. I played a female in a volatile relationship that ultimately gets to drag my 180 lb. partner off the stage!

What is in your dance bag?

I carry around a dance bag with way too many things, but at least I'm always prepared! Of the many things it includes; my ballet shoes, pointe shoes, toe pads, therabands, a foam roller, foot roller, lacrosse ball (for tight muscles), an emergency kit with bandaids, toe tape, arnica gel, ibuprofen, a sewing bag for any sewing needs, mints and eye drops. I seriously carry way too much stuff!

What do you do outside of dance? Do you have any hobbies?

I actually have a lot of hobbies outside of ballet. I love to hike, bike and exercise! But I'm also a very crafty person. I have a very small personal Instagram business making wire crafts like bridal wire hangers and just recently bought a sewing machine and have made a few of my own dance clothes!

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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Helps service organizations distribute more than **5,000** free tickets each year,



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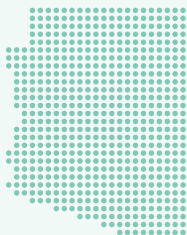
STUDENT MATINEES

Inspire over 11,000 students and educators each year.



BALLET UNDER THE STARS

brings the magic of dance to 12,000 people in multiple communities each year.



DANCEAZ

Creates empowering opportunities in 6 low-income, low-access school communities around the Valley.

BALLET ARIZONA 2018-2019 SEASON
UPCOMING DONOR EVENTS

May 2 – 5 (All Prima Circle Members) | Symphony Hall
Intermission Receptions at *All Balanchine*

May 9 (\$1,000 & Up) | Desert Botanical Garden
Eroica Rehearsal Viewing

May 14 – June 1 | Desert Botanical Garden
Eroica Performance

May 22 (\$1,500 & Up) | Desert Botanical Garden
Eroica Prima Circle Reception

May 25 – 26 | Orpheum Theatre
School of Ballet Arizona's Spring Performance

September 6 (\$1,500 & Up)
Today's Masters Studio Spotlight Reception & Performance

We would love to hear from you! Please send any comments or suggestions to Annual Fund Coordinator Elyse Salisz at esalisz@balletaz.org or call 602.343.6510.

BALLET
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IB ANDERSEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Ballet Arizona presents

EROICA

May 14 – June 1, 2019
at Desert Botanical Garden

Back by popular demand by Arizona audiences, this immersive performance draws sellout crowds with ballet that takes chances and challenges emotional boundaries in the breathtaking setting of Desert Botanical Garden.



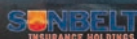
~ The Arizona Republic

Tickets: balletaz.org | 602.381.1096



Carol & Randy Schilling

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BALLET
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Ballet Arizona dancers in Ib Andersen's *Eroica*. Photo by Alexander Izilliaev.

