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Ballet Arizona Announces Familiar Face as New School Director

Longtime Company Rehearsal Director to Lead Education Efforts at The School of Ballet Arizona

PHOENIX - [Ballet Arizona](#) is pleased to announce that Maria Simonetti, longtime Studio Company rehearsal director, has assumed leadership of [The School of Ballet Arizona](#) as school director. Simonetti, who has been with Ballet Arizona's Studio Company for 22 years, will focus her leadership on school management, curricular and faculty development and school productions.

The appointment comes as the result of a year-long search that included candidates from throughout the United States. During that time, Simonetti served as interim director along with Lisbet Companioni. Simonetti demonstrated that there is no better candidate to lead student development than one who has worked alongside Ballet Arizona's Artistic Director, Ib Andersen, for many years, helping him establish Ballet Arizona as a nationally-recognized professional company.

"I am honored to serve as the school director for Ballet Arizona," Simonetti said. "Working alongside Ib Andersen for the past twenty years has given me the unique opportunity to provide dance education directly modeled after his artistic vision. Our students will continue to receive impeccable training from world-renown faculty that believe in a holistic and well-rounded dance education."

To support Simonetti as School Director, Companioni will continue to be involved in student training and rehearsals. Last month, the faculty was expanded to include Gillmer Duran as a full-time faculty member and Roberto Munoz as a permanent guest faculty member. These individuals, along with a team of full-time and part-time faculty members from around the world, will provide classical ballet training of the highest caliber.

Simonetti has a deep professional background in ballet. She lends her talents as a visiting artist for dance companies around the world, including Hubbard Street Dance, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Kansas City Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater, Cuballet, among others. She trained as a dancer at Teatro Colon in Cuba and danced with La Joven Guardia of Ballet Nacional de Cuba.

The School of Ballet Arizona provides dance training based on the evolving, yet traditional, concepts of classical ballet. Offering a wide variety of classes across a range of ages and skill levels, The School of Ballet Arizona is proud to offer comprehensive dance training that meets the expectations of professional dance companies, as well as those looking to dance as a supplement to enrich their lives. Classes are offered for all ages and abilities and include live piano accompaniment and ongoing professional development.

Ballet Arizona

Ballet Arizona, now in its 34th season, is dedicated to preserving and celebrating classical dance while creating new and innovative works. Under the artistic direction of internationally acclaimed choreographer Ib Andersen - a former Principal Dancer with The New York City Ballet and The Royal Danish Ballet - Ballet Arizona follows his lead to the future of dance in Arizona. The School of Ballet Arizona promotes access to the art form of ballet through dance education, with a focus on excellence in the form, directing each student to a life-long love of dance. Following this vision, Ballet Arizona connects to more than 35,000 children and families every year through its free and low cost outreach programs. For more information, visit [balletaz.org](#).

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