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*Artistic Director  
Ib Andersen*

# TURNING POINTE

*New Year  
New Programs  
New Works*

How your support  
continues to elevate  
Ballet Arizona



Ballet Arizona dancer Arianni Martin. Photo by Alexander Izilliaev.



## Our New Year resolution to you is to make you proud of your impact at Ballet Arizona.

### Happy New Year!

In the spirit of celebrating all things new – this issue of your donor impact report will focus on some of our new programs and new works. I am delighted to feature dancer Nayon Iovino as he discusses his new ballet for our *Today's Masters* program this spring. We also have some very exciting news: world renowned dancer David Hallberg joins us in April for an entire day of master classes and conversations.

Also, I will talk a bit about my production of *Napoli*, the story of the fisherman and his bride. This is a monumental achievement for our Company and I am proud that we are the first Company in the United States to premiere such an iconic ballet in its full length. Bournonville created an extraordinary piece and it is one of the great masterpieces of its era.

My leadership partner, Executive Director David Tompkins, writes about two new programs offered by The School of Ballet Arizona: Adaptive Dance and Dance for Parkinson's. These programs help us to deepen our impact in our community – bringing the joy of dance to more and more individuals in our new home.

In this report, we shine our spotlight on three different donors: one corporate, one government and one individual, to demonstrate the many ways you make possible all that we do and to recognize them for their support.

On behalf of all of us at Ballet Arizona, I thank you for your continued generosity. Stay tuned for a sneak preview of our upcoming 2015-2016 season in our next issue.

Our New Year resolution to you is to make you proud of your impact at Ballet Arizona. We hope to achieve this by continuing to produce great works with our talented dancers and to deepen our community impact so that more individuals can be touched by our beautiful art form.

Sincerely,

Ib Andersen, Artistic Director

## BEHIND THE SCENES with Ib Andersen

### Q: Why *Napoli*?

**A:** I grew up with *Napoli* – it was my first ballet when I was 7. It is essentially the national ballet of Denmark. When any statesmen, dignitary or official from around the world visits Denmark, it is not uncommon for them to see a performance of Act III of *Napoli* as part of the customary welcome to Danish culture and heritage. What is also remarkable about this piece is that it is one of the few surviving masterpieces from ballet's Romantic era (1842). It is not very well known outside of Denmark because it is such a difficult ballet to set and holds a very Danish tradition. Our attempt to stage the full-length U.S. premiere in Arizona is quite a challenge for Ballet Arizona and something extraordinary for our audiences to witness firsthand!

Denmark has been somewhat isolated in the North – they have been good at maintaining works in their original form, which is not the case with many other ballets that survived from that century. The second act is lost however. The scenario and music are there, but the choreography is completely lost. Staging this work as Bournonville's magnum opus is probably one of the most difficult things we have ever done.

The work itself imagines Naples during the mid-1800s, especially during the first act. There is a very intricate storyline so there is a lot of pantomime. This is normal life in Naples in 1842 – not ballet in the normal sense – but a real life setting and staging. This requires so much from the dancers to be able to do that. They need to be even more dramatic in their roles. The dance and the storyline are very integrated. The first act is very cinematic – one little scene moving into the next. That's very rare in ballet. This ballet is about life.

Bournonville was born in Copenhagen, trained in Paris and became one of the most famous stars in Paris Opera as a dancer during the 1820s and 1830s. He was known all over Europe and when you read his biography, he recounts stories about the people he met during his travels on ships and wagons around Europe that knew him – because they saw him dance. As a choreographer, his movement is extremely challenging; it requires technique and musicality at a level that if you can dance Bournonville well you can basically dance anything. *Napoli* is really one of the best representations of Bournonville's style.



*Napoli* represents a golden period in Danish history. You won't find a more creative period in the arts for writing, ballet, or painting in Danish history. All those famous Danes during that time period producing great art – considering the city was only about 100,000 people – they all knew each other. He was a contemporary of Hans Christian Andersen; they were actually close friends. Bournonville traveled to Naples because artists from the North traveled to the South. Coming from cold Denmark, he was inspired to be surrounded by sunlight and a city so vibrant and colorful. That is where the inspiration for *Napoli* originated.

To present this on American soil is a tremendous feat for Ballet Arizona and I am very proud to be able to do so. We will see what happens...now I just hope we can pull it off!

**Q: We will be seeing one other new work by you in March. What can you tell us about it?**

**A:** Not much really (Ha!). But I can share the music with you. It will be the “Pines of Rome” by Ottorino Respighi from 1924. It is a huge piece with four different movements. I have already begun work on the first and second movements, but right now I am really focused on polishing *Napoli*. It will probably be a very large ballet – with at least 20 dancers or so. Classical music lovers will recognize the music and think to themselves, “What is this guy trying to do!” The music is very beautiful and I am looking forward to diving into the new work once we have mastered *Napoli*!

**Presenting Napoli on American soil is a tremendous feat for Ballet Arizona and I am very proud to be able to do so.**



Ballet Arizona dancers Brian Leonard and Arianni Martin. Photo by Alexander Iziliaev.

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Leona Aiken as a dancer in the Richmond Civic Ballet

## Donor Spotlight

Leona Aiken

**Ballet AZ: You are such a longstanding supporter of the arts in Arizona. What inspired such generosity to the arts and specifically, Ballet Arizona?**

**Leona:** My parents took me to the ballet and to the symphony when I was very young, growing up in Richmond, VA. Like many little girls, I fell in love with ballet and went to ballet school. When I was a teenager, the Richmond Civic Ballet (RCB) was created and I joined the company for its first season (this was years before the creation of the current Richmond Ballet). The RCB danced the classics and new ballets. The training was excellent – outstanding guest artists from American Ballet Theater staged ballets and performed with the company. After completing graduate school, I taught at Temple University in Philadelphia, home of the Pennsylvania Ballet. When I moved to Phoenix in 1985, I immediately sought out ballet and attended Ballet Arizona performances. With the arrival of Ib Andersen, the Company

blossomed, and I felt compelled to support this development. On a much more personal level, while I am a psychology professor at Arizona State University, I still teach ballet as a hobby and take ballet classes. Early on ballet was central in my life, and it remains so.

**Ballet AZ: Why do you give?**

**Leona:** My answer is selfish – my childhood passion for ballet is undiminished. My husband, Stephen West, and I share a love of ballet. Great cities have great performing arts, and Phoenix is our home. Thus we support the ballet and the symphony. Ballet Arizona embodies a value in which I believe – ballet should be an accessible art form, not a rarefied form for the culturally elite. Ballet Arizona makes ballet accessible to the whole community, for example, with wonderful Ballet Under the Stars performances and the Student Matinees. Ballet Arizona is a “people’s” company for this community.

**Ballet AZ: What ballets or contemporary works have inspired you the most?**

**Leona:** I do love the grand old “white ballets” – *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Les Sylphides*. To mention

one dancer: Natalia Magnicaballi, as Odette-Odile is stunning. On the other end of the ballet spectrum, new works made by Ballet Arizona have been noteworthy – Alejandro Cerrudo’s *Second to Last* stands out to me as does Ib Andersen’s *Mosaik*. Jerome Robbins’ *In the Night* is a favorite of mine, a beautiful portrayal of relationships. These pieces provide a view of the power, beauty and versatility of the individual dancers. It is a treasure for Phoenix that Ib Andersen was a leading Balanchine dancer, a principal in New York City Ballet, and is now a répétiteur of the George Balanchine Trust, giving us so much of Balanchine each year.

**Ballet AZ: What are you most looking forward to this upcoming season?**

**Leona:** *Napoli* – a new ballet for me.

**Ballet AZ: Any other comments you might like to contribute?**

**Leona:** When my friends from the East Coast ask me about life in Phoenix, the first thing I mention about quality of life is Ballet Arizona. The Company symbolizes just how far the arts community of Phoenix has come.

## Corporate Spotlight

SRP

When Ballet Arizona presents the U.S. premiere of *Napoli* in February of 2015, SRP will join in the celebration as a corporate sponsor for the production. SRP is the acronym for the Salt River Project, a company that has been in business serving central Arizona since 1903, ten years before Arizona became a state.

The Salt River Project is the umbrella name for the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District which serves as an electrical utility for the Phoenix metropolitan area, and the Salt River Valley Water Users’ Association that serves as the primary water provider for much of central Arizona. As a provider of water and powered electricity, SRP serves more than one million customers a year and is the largest supplier of well-water in Arizona.

SRP believes in giving back to the community and the goal of its Corporate Contributions Program is to make the community a better place for its customers and employees to live and conduct business. In 2014, SRP contributions to the community totaled more than \$3 million and provided support in five areas: Arts & Culture, Civic Programs, Education, Environmental Programs, and Health and Human Services.

Ballet Arizona is grateful for SRP’s ongoing support, but also its tremendous belief in supporting the Valley community, making it a vibrant place to live and work.

Visit [srpnet.com](http://srpnet.com), like them on Facebook or follow @SRPconnect on Twitter

Ballet Arizona thanks SRP for its support of *Napoli*.



## Government Spotlight

Gila River Indian Community

Ballet Arizona held its most successful annual *Nutcracker Festival* last November for more than 700 parents and children. Its success was due in part to the tremendous sponsorship support, including one of our newest sponsors, the Gila River Indian Community.

Because of its strong belief in self-sustainment, the Gila River Indian Community supports members of its tribe through such programs as health services and educational scholarships for students. It is very supportive of its youth, and was the first federally recognized tribe to establish branches of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America on its community.

Ballet Arizona is extremely grateful for the Gila River Indian Community’s sponsorship and would like to thank former Governor Gregory Mendoza for his support of the *Nutcracker Festival*, and would like to welcome the new Governor, Stephen Roe Lewis.



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*David Tompkins*

**T**his season, The School of Ballet Arizona launched two new programs to improve the health and wellness of individuals in our community. I am proud to announce these new programs and hope that you will feel a sense of pride too – knowing that your support has helped create them.

This fall, Ballet Arizona launched our new Adaptive Dance program serving children with Down Syndrome as they safely explore movement. The model of this program is based on the success that Boston Ballet’s adaptive dance program has achieved for over 20 years. This weekly dance class is taught by The School of Ballet Arizona faculty member Kay Murray-Price and Physical Therapist Tammy Groenwald for children between 8-13 years old. The class is designed to help the student achieve social growth and provide an important outlet for self-expression. The goals are to teach rhythm, safe stretching and body awareness, build assurance and self-confidence, develop an appreciation for different types of music, enhance social skills and have fun. Boston Ballet’s adaptive dance participants have demonstrated great success with the following observable accomplishments that we aim to have our students at Ballet Arizona replicate: enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, increased pride, cooperating with and encouraging others, increased appreciation and knowledge of music and rhythm, distinguishing right and left, attending to and following directions, increased focus, stopping/starting on cue, improved balance, posture and alignment, and separating upper and lower body movement patterns.

Our second program is our Dance for Parkinson’s classes. These are open classes offered every Wednesday and students can drop-in at any time for only a \$5 fee. This class is taught by Debbie Braganza in collaboration with the Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center and the focus is to develop flexibility and instill confidence. These classes are appropriate for anyone with PD, no matter how advanced. No dance experience is required. In chairs, at a barre or moving across the floor, participants explore elements of modern dance, ballet, tap, folk and social dancing. Dance is a stimulating mental activity that connects the mind and body; it breaks isolation and helps to tell stories. This March, Ballet Arizona is hosting a training workshop that provides dance teachers, dancers, physical and occupational therapists, social workers and allied health professionals with a comprehensive and inspiring introduction to the internationally-acclaimed Dance for PD® program. Mark Morris Dance Group, Ballet Arizona and Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center-Barrow Neurological Institute partner to bring these workshops. They are also hosting one free class on Saturday, March 21 for persons with Parkinson’s and their families, friends and care partners.

Help us spread the word to anyone in your circles that might benefit from these classes. We are proud to be able to share the joy of dance with even more members of our community each year in our new home, and these two programs are great examples of such achievements.

David Tompkins, Executive Director



Photo by Michaela Konzal.

## Save the Date

### A Day with David Hallberg

Sunday, April 19, 2015

Ballet Arizona alumnus David Hallberg stunned and thrilled the dance world when he joined Russia’s famed Bolshoi Ballet in 2011 as its first American principal dancer. Join him on Sunday, April 19, 2015 for a day dedicated to raising funds for the David Hallberg Scholarship for Boys at The School of Ballet Arizona.

Hallberg, who is also one of American Ballet Theater’s most lauded principal dancers said, “It is never an easy feat to have the courage or the means to find your calling in ballet as a young boy, but this scholarship will help facilitate that journey through financial support and guidance.”

Contributions for taking or observing master classes for advanced dancers above age 13 will support the two-year-old scholarship. Hallberg will be guest of honor at a luncheon where he will share stories of his life as one of the world’s leading dancers. Luncheon tickets are \$150. Sponsors of the event who contribute \$1,000 or more will be invited to a private rehearsal to watch David coach advanced students.

For further details or to make reservations for *A Day with David Hallberg*, please contact Development Officer Bob Bondlow at [rbondlow@balletaz.org](mailto:rbondlow@balletaz.org) or 602.343.6506.

David Hallberg in American Ballet Theatre’s production of Jerome Robbins’ *Other Dances*. Photo by Rosalie O’Connor, courtesy of American Ballet Theatre and The Robbins Rights Trust.





# THE SCHOOL OF BALLET ARIZONA

At The School of Ballet Arizona (SBAZ), the new year means our halls are once again filled with over 250 aspiring ballet dancers who are eager to resume their classes. Our adult students also return to taking a wide variety of Open Adult Classes that SBAZ offers such as Zumba, Ballet, Modern, Yoga and Ballroom.

The new year also marks the beginning of the annual School Campaign. The School Campaign supports Artistic Director Ib Andersen and School Director Carlos Valcárcel's goal of offering a high caliber dance education while maintaining affordable tuition for all those who aspire to dance. SBAZ tuition and fees for adult classes only cover 75% of the School's operating costs. The School Campaign helps bridge this gap through the support of SBAZ families and community supporters.

Funding from the School Campaign directly benefits all of its students in the form of live musical accompaniment during classes, opportunities to perform with Ballet Arizona in full-length productions at Symphony Hall, and an internationally-renowned teaching staff. SBAZ teachers help students achieve their goals and dreams while building lifelong skills and strengths – both on the stage and in all facets of life. Through their dance education, our students develop qualities such as perseverance, musicality, discipline, creativity and self-confidence.

## *We thank all of you who have supported the School Campaign in the past.*

For more information about the School Campaign, please visit [balletaz.org/school/support-the-school](http://balletaz.org/school/support-the-school).

### **2015 School Campaign Co-Chairs**

Stephanie Goodman, *Ballet Arizona Board Member & School Parent*  
Allyson Acker, *School Parent* | Thomas Waite, *School Parent*

*“My training [at SBAZ] taught me discipline in all forms. Ballet dancers are incredibly disciplined people, and from a young age, we’re taught to be focused and strong in order to be the dancers that we need and want to be.”*

– Brian Leonard,  
SBAZ alumnus and current Company member



Ballet Arizona dancer Brian Leonard. Photo by Alexander Iziliaev.

# Q&A *Today's Masters Choreographer, Nayon Iovino*

## Tell us about your new work?

The music is Pink Floyd's "Echoes" written by all four of the members in 1970. It is early Pink Floyd and the music is definitely Rock 'n Roll, whereas last time I chose a blend of different music. I also plan to use some different dancers, which will change the choreography. Each dancer brings something new and unique to a piece. The 23-minute track doesn't have any moments of silence and is definitely a contemporary work with a little classical influence in it.

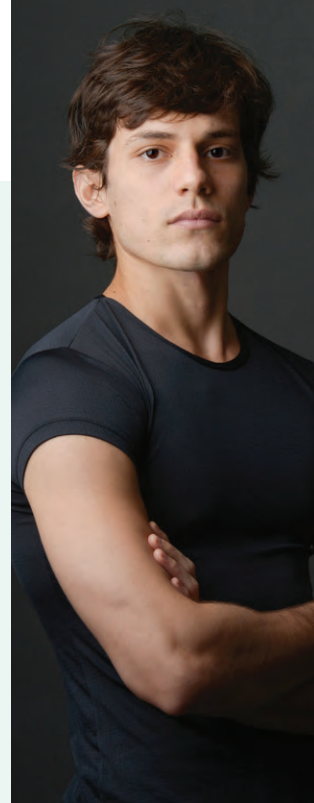
## What can audiences expect?

I want our audiences to be open-minded. This is something completely different and new. I'm not planning for them to come in and leave with some specific idea in mind. Rather, my goal is for them to see new and different choreography, and create their own interpretation of the piece.

## Describe your process?

I am very new to this area so I don't have my process completely nailed down yet. I'm still learning and each time my process is different. This time, I listened to the music first and then I could see a story unfold. I convey the story to the dancers, which hopefully creates an atmosphere for them to be creative and inspired. The dancers have an influence over the end result. We are all working together and they each have different movements. They share their talents with me and together we keep finding more.

For me, "Echoes" marks the beginning of something infinite. If there was a "story" I was trying to convey, it would be all of the human emotions that we experience echoing throughout eternity and becoming more and more complex. But this is left to your own interpretation, of course!



## COMPANY CONNECTION *Meet Napoli dancers Arianni and Brian*



### **Arianni Martin**

started dancing at age 5 in Santiago de Cuba

#### **What role are you dancing in *Napoli*?**

I'm really excited to be dancing the role of Teresina in *Napoli*. It is something completely new and different, and I think it's always good to branch out and explore new things.

#### **Dancing at Ballet Arizona, which role has been your favorite and why?**

Definitely *Swan Lake*. I love the music - it's so beautiful, and that's probably what I love the most. But this was also my first time dancing

the principal role of Odette/Odile. It's such a difficult role that it was like a challenge I needed to overcome. Plus, it's every ballerina's dream to dance the white and black swan!

#### **What inspired you to start dancing ballet?**

There used to be this arts program on TV in Cuba that I watched when I was little, and every time ballet came on I'd point to the screen and tell my parents, "That's what I want to do."

#### **What inspires you to dance today?**

My family. Thinking that they did everything so I can become someone successful, that all of their hard work wasn't in vain. That's what inspires me to go to work every day and give my best.



### **Brian Leonard**

started dancing at age 12 in Santa Clara, CA at Santa Clara Ballet

#### **What role are you dancing in *Napoli*?**

The character I'm dancing is Golfo, an evil sea creature who lives in the Blue Grotto. I'm mostly excited about this role because he is so different - he really wants to be with Teresina at all costs. It's a nice change

to go from a love struck Prince to a strong go-getting character.

#### **What inspired you to start dancing ballet?**

My mom made me take ballet. I didn't want to at first, but she was a professional ballet dancer in New York. My whole family is very artistic and every one of us has danced at some point, but only two of us are dancing right now. My older sister is an actress.

#### **What is it like being personally coached by Ib Andersen for your premiere roles as Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, and your first *Sugar Plum Cavalier*?**

It's an amazing opportunity to say that you've been coached by someone as experienced as Ib. I mean, it's amazing - he was the star of New York City Ballet! He definitely demands a level of technique and artistry that often times you don't really think you can give, but he pushes you and he expects it out of you, and for me, when people expect that, that's when I can give my best.

#### **What skills has your ballet training given you to best succeed as an adult?**

I would say discipline, in every aspect of the word. Ballet dancers are incredibly disciplined people, and from a young age, we're taught to be focused and strong in order to be the dancers that we need and want to be.

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WINTER 2015

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Ballet Arizona dancer Brian Leonard. Photo by Alexander Izilliaev.

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