

## BALLET ARIZONA 2022–2023 SEASON UPCOMING DONOR EVENTS

**February 8** (\$3,500 & Up)  
*Giselle* Dress Rehearsal Viewing

**February 9 – 12** (All)  
*Giselle* Performances | Madison Center for the Arts

**February 9 – 12** (All Prima Circle Members)  
Intermission Receptions at *Giselle* | Madison Center for the Arts

**March 9** (All Prima Circle Members)  
Prima Circle Rehearsal & Luncheon

**March 14** (\$500 & Up)  
Corps de Ballet Rehearsal Viewing & Breakfast

**April 14** (All)  
*Dance With Me* – A Ballet Arizona Gala | Phoenix Art Museum

**April 21** (All Prima Circle Members)  
All Balanchine Studio Spotlight & Reception

**BALLET**  
ARIZONA

IB ANDERSEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

2835 E. Washington St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

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# DANCE WITH ME BALLET ARIZONA'S 2023 GALA

SAVE THE DATE  
**FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2023**

**CHAIR** Joan Berry

**LOCATION** Phoenix Art Museum

**TABLE SPONSORSHIPS** (tables are for ten)

\$50,000 Platinum Sponsorship  
\$25,000 Gold Sponsorship  
\$10,000 Silver Sponsorship  
\$6,000 Bronze Sponsorship  
\$600 Individual Seat

**PROCEEDS FROM THE EVENT WILL  
SUPPORT THE ARTISTRY YOU SEE ON-STAGE  
AND IN OUR COMMUNITY.**

For additional information, please contact Melissa Watson,  
Director of Philanthropy, at [mwatson@balletaz.org](mailto:mwatson@balletaz.org) or  
602.343.6520.



SAVE  
THE  
DATE

**Q&A:**  
*Artistic Director*  
*Ib Andersen*

**Letter From the  
Executive Director:**  
*Jami Kozemczak*

**In the Spotlight:**  
*Andersen-Panvini*  
*Repertory Selection Fund*

**Education Highlight:**  
*Hoop Dance*

# TURNING POINTE

*Big Dreams for the Future*



Ballet Arizona dancers in *Giselle*. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.



**Thank you for filling our lives with dance.**

Cheers to 2023! We begin on a high point, as I am honored to share this edition of Turning Pointe is dedicated to Michael Panvini, who celebrates his 15th year as Ballet Arizona's Director of Production. All that we cherish about live performance happens because of Michael and his team. Witnessing how every production comes together is incredible and a constant reminder of how honored I am to work alongside someone who shares my passion for this work.

Speaking of incredible things, it is with profound gratitude that I acknowledge the creation of a new endowment, the *Andersen-Panvini Repertory Selection Fund*. This new fund will help assure our ability to keep presenting Balanchine ballets and will facilitate adding new works to Ballet Arizona's repertoire. Made possible by visionary arts supporter Bob Benson, this investment will help shape the company's future, both financially and artistically.

Our excitement continues between all of our upcoming productions and community programs...

I am thrilled to start the New Year at Madison Center for the Arts with the timeless beauty of *Giselle*. It is everything classical ballet should be and everything you want classical ballet to be.

Through your investment, our programs continue to make a direct impact in people's lives. I hope you enjoy our spotlight on Native American Hoop Dance, a program that has deepened the ballet's connection to our community.

Lastly, there is so much to be grateful for, beyond what is shared in this edition, and you are the reason it is possible. **Thank you** for filling our lives with dance.

Gratefully,

Ib Andersen, Artistic Director

## BEHIND THE SCENES with Ib Andersen

### Q: Tell us about *Giselle*...

**A:** *Giselle* is a complete masterpiece. The story itself is simple, a fairy tale about love and betrayal, and yet, everything about it is iconic... every step... every breath. It is one of the true, perfect ballets, in my opinion – more so than *Swan Lake* or *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Musically and choreographically, it is such a well-told story, but scraping that away, it is a story about humanity. It does not matter that the ballet is 182 years old. Stories about human nature transcend time. They are for everyone, which is why *Giselle* will never be an outdated work. The only time it will be outdated is when it is not done right.

### Q: What is it like to reprise this work nearly a decade later?

**A:** No ballet has ever moved me as much as *Giselle* and staging it last time was very intense. One performance, I was so shook up, I actually had to leave the theatre and take a walk during intermission! I have never had that feeling before or since, so reprising this ballet has been exhilarating.

Like I said, *Giselle* is everything, but it is more demanding than any other ballet because it hinges on who is performing the roles. If the acting is not there, you do not have the ballet. If the technicality is not there, you do not have the ballet. And of course, the demands for Act I and II are completely different.

There are so many different ways to interpret the characters that the dancers need to know what they are going to do and how. Take Albrecht; is he a shallow womanizer, who is looking for a bit of fun? Or are his feelings for Giselle real? You can do it brilliantly either



## In Rehearsal

# GISELLE



way, but deciding what path is essential to shaping the story. There can be no questions, no hesitation, because roles like this require great acting.

Coming from the Royal Danish Ballet – famous for their acting – I learned you are that person, not “acting” as that person. That is what I am after in our dancers and it asks a lot of them. Plus... the audience will know... the audience always knows when a performance is not genuine. Ballet may not have words, but you are reading a person’s body and you can feel if it is genuine. The body does not lie.

### Q: Why are the roles of Giselle and Albrecht so special for dancers?

A: Obviously, I never danced the role of Giselle, but I have to imagine it is one of the most satisfying. She embodies so many of the complexities of human nature. To learn her, to become her, is such an amazing challenge. Adding in the technical demands of the choreography, roles do not get any better than that!

For Albrecht, there are still deep complexities to his character but the challenges are different. In Act I, he is off stage for maybe 25 minutes in the middle, so it is easy to feel disconnected. It requires a lot for a dancer to stay connected from the wings because you cannot just turn that off and on. Some people can, but I do not think very successfully. Act II is more straightforward when Albrecht dances to his death. If you are not physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausted, you are not doing it right. However, that is what makes this role so satisfying for a dancer.

Both roles are why *Giselle* is such an incredible ballet. The characters and their choreography are perfectly woven together, it all just makes sense.

# THE ANDERSEN-PANVINI REPERTORY SELECTION FUND

**Ballet Arizona is proud to announce a new endowment fund, established in honor of Artistic Director, Ib Andersen and Director of Production, Michael Panvini.**

The purpose of the **Andersen-Panvini Repertory Selection Fund** is to further Ballet Arizona's mission by helping produce future ballets, encouraging a balance of works by George Balanchine and newly commissioned pieces.

This artistic investment was envisioned and created by our dear friend and arts advocate, Bob Benson. In his 20s, Bob developed a keen interest in

ballet, focusing on George Balanchine's choreography as performed by New York City Ballet. In 2013, his partnership with Ballet Arizona began, supporting the newly commissioned *Second to Last* by Alejandro Cerrudo. For nearly a decade, Bob has worked in conjunction with Ib and Michael, producing 14 subsequent ballets, all new to Arizona audiences. These works include Justin Peck's *In Creases*, Naylor Lovino's *Threads*, and George Balanchine's *Symphony in 3 Movements*, among others.

The initial gift of \$400,000 will be permanently restricted, adding to

the ballet's current endowment and supplemented by a future bequest from Bob's estate. The earnings from this fund will support a portion of the costs to produce these works, such as choreographer fees, rights and royalties, music accompaniment, and incoming staggers or répétiteurs.

Ballet Arizona is honored to accept such a generous and transformational gift. We are even more honored to work alongside people like Michael and Ib, who encourage individuals to ensure their legacies, and the legacy of Ballet Arizona, lives on for future generations.



*When we view a Ballet Arizona program, of course we appreciate the beauty and talent of the dancers, along with the music we hear. The secret sauce that sometimes goes under-appreciated is the composition of the program – the selection of repertoire, the negotiation of program rights, and assembling of all the necessary resources – typically all accomplished months in advance.*

– Bob Benson



## Meet Michael Panvini

**The man behind the curtain, who ensures the magic you see on stage is executed flawlessly.**

Michael's production career spans decades, touring all over North America with dozens of ballet, folk

dance, and opera companies from around the world. From working on over 100 Off-Broadway shows and touring Broadway musicals, like *A Chorus Line* and *Singin' in the Rain*, to productions like *The Magic of David Copperfield*, Michael carries with him an invaluable wealth of experience and knowledge.

*"I can always count on him, and his masterful attention to detail, to deliver the high-quality production values you expect to see on stage,"* says Artistic Director, Ib Andersen. *"There are endless stories I could share, but one that perfectly highlights Michael's dedication is when he saved our U.S. premiere of Napoli in 2014. He singlehandedly negotiated the release of The Royal*

*Danish Ballet's costumes and sets from the shipping ports with a worker strike impending... it was down to the minute!"*

As for one of Michael's proudest moments, it was serving as lead staff for the design and construction of Ballet Arizona's new home in 2013. *"It was a two-year process that I had the pleasure of being involved in from the start,"* says Michael. *"I worked with contractor, Larry Mohr, and with our combined expertise, we ensured every penny of our capital funds were stretched to the fullest extent. Now, we have one of the most impressive dance facilities in the Southwest."*

Please join us in thanking Michael for his years of service and for choosing Ballet Arizona to share his time and talent!



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Jami Kozemczak*

## *Truly a December to Remember...*

**O**n December 12, I received word that we were to receive a Covid-19 relief grant in the amount of \$600,000 from the Governor’s Office. The entire staff erupted in cheers and applause upon hearing the news. This was just one of many magical moments shared at Ballet Arizona as of late. This support will continue to lengthen the recovery road that we have before us as we put forward plans for stability and imminent growth for our future.

Sales numbers for our annual performance of *The Nutcracker* broke all previous historical records by 40%. Due to demand, we extended our run of performances – and even then – the last week completely sold out. Thank you to each and every one of you that returned to the ballet with your family to share your holiday tradition with us. You helped us achieve this great success and we are reinvigorated by your overwhelming response. You have shown us that we are an integral part of this community and you came out by the thousands to support us. The dancers have never felt more alive than when dancing in Symphony Hall for you during these sold out performances.

There is a great energy surrounding the organization right now. I attribute that to many things – but mostly the people – our dancers, our staff, our donors, and the constituents we serve. I watched our team pull together over these past six months to support one another, to fill-in staffing shortages through illness and turnover, and to lend a helping hand whenever asked. The dancers have been performing beautifully to SOLD OUT houses, helping each other through tragedy, illness, and injury. Our donors have stepped up with new commitments that is a testament to their belief in our mission. Together we have achieved some great things and I have never been prouder to

be a part of something so special.

Our organization just embarked on nine-month strategic planning journey driven by the board and senior leadership. We are examining every facet of our mission as we dare to put forward big dreams for our future. We have spent so many years feeling the pinch of scarcity and stifled by our fears of economic insecurity. Our hope is to expand our artistic offering even further by creating more new blockbusters, like *Juan Gabriel*, to create school satellite locations to broaden our educational reach in the Valley, to invest in our staff, and to serve even more individuals through our free community engagement programs – to truly become the epicenter for dance in our community.

I met individually with 65 different staff members as part of my 120-day plan and every single person brought forward a more unique and visionary idea than the one before. It is through sharing these exciting conversations and hopes for the future that we have those moments that give you goosebumps and fill you with inspiration.

We cannot wait to share them with you. I encourage you to share yours with me. What are your hopes and dreams for this company that you support so generously? I would love to know – after all you are the only reason we are in a place to actually listen to them.

Gratefully,

Jami Kozemczak, *Executive Director*



Ballet Arizona dancers in *The Nutcracker*. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.



# The art of HOOP DANCE

*The art of hoop dance honors cultural traditions shared by multiple Indigenous communities, with roots in healing ceremonies, traditions and practices. Today, hoop dance is shared as an artistic expression to celebrate and honor Indigenous traditions throughout the U.S. and Canada... Passed down from one generation to the next, hoop dancing communicates individual and tribal stories using hoops to create symbols and depict animals of great meaning in Native communities. The continuous circle of the hoops symbolizes the circle of life and the continual changing of the seasons.*

*– Heard Museum*

In 2019, Ballet Arizona established the Tribal Nations Advisory Council with the goal of cultivating stronger relationships with our local Native communities. A key focus of the Council is to ensure Native youth in the Valley have the opportunity to learn the art of hoop dance.

The following year, we created the Native American Hoop Dance program, first led by Ginger Sykes-Torres (Navajo), a World Champion Hoop Dancer and Council member, and now Eva Bighorse (Navajo) who has toured internationally performing Native American dances including Hoop Dance.

During the pandemic, a small group of Native youth met for virtual classes once a week before finally moving to in-person lessons at The School of Ballet Arizona in the summer of 2022. The program has continued to grow, now offering beginner and intermediate classes, with more levels hopefully on the way.

Students participating in this program have the opportunity to engage in cultural mentorship with leaders in their communities and participate in an art form that promotes physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

*“The Native American Hoop Dance class at Ballet Arizona is truly one of a kind,” says Ginger Sykes-Torres. “The Council worked to create this cultural opportunity for Native American youth to learn an intertribal dance rooted in tradition while building confidence, coordination, and self-esteem. Starting this class was important because it facilitates inclusivity between the Native American community and SBAZ. I hope it will allow the students to branch out and engage in ballet and other forms of dance.”*

We want to thank our  
Official Community  
Engagement sponsor



**We would love to hear from you!** Please send any comments or suggestions to Annual Fund Manager, Elyse Salisz at [esalisz@balletaz.org](mailto:esalisz@balletaz.org) or call 602.343.6510.

# COMPANY CONNECTION



## Trey Puckett

Spokane, Washington  
 Joined Ballet Arizona: 2022

### What inspired you to become a dancer?

I took my first ballet class when I was 10 years old. I really loved that I could really work hard on something that is physically demanding while making it look and feel beautiful.

### You were previously in our Studio Company. What is it like transitioning from student to professional?

I was dancing and working with the company a lot while in Studio Company but I think the biggest change is having less one on one corrections and needing to work and learn choreography faster.

### Do you have any highlights from this season so far?

Working on and performing Christopher Wheeldon's *Within the Golden Hour* was definitely a highlight. I am also always excited when our *All Balanchine* program comes around!

### Every dancer has a dream role, what is yours?

I would really like to perform George Balanchine's *Tarantella*. I love the competition and playfulness of the duet... the energy is so engaging.

### What are some of your current obsessions?

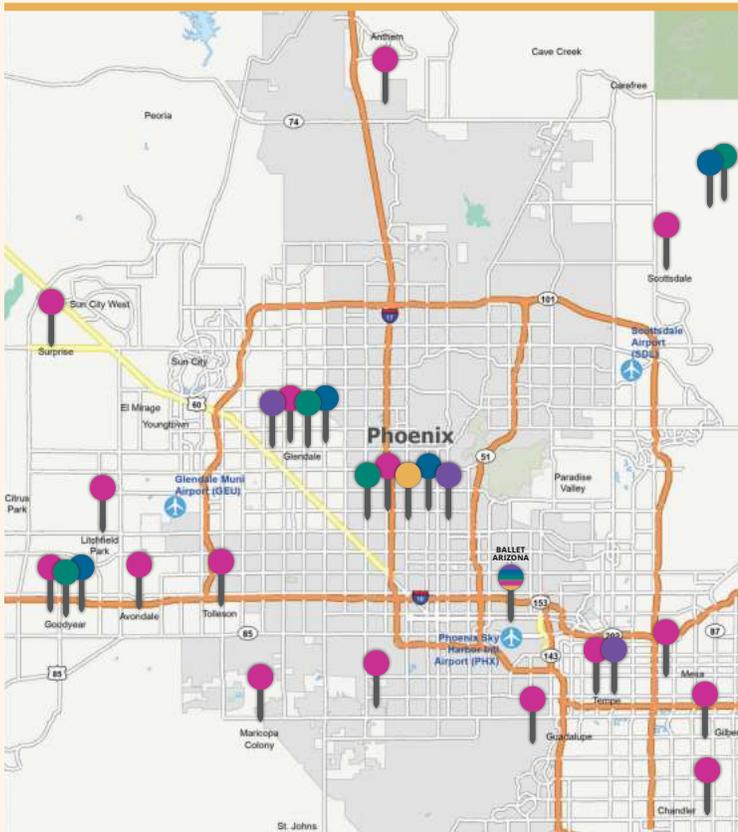
I just finished watching *Schitt's Creek* and *Dead to Me*. The way those shows incorporate real life situations with comedy is \*chefs kiss\*!



Trey Puckett in *The Nutcracker*. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.

## BALLET ARIZONA ACROSS THE VALLEY

*Each year, nearly \$1 million of your support is invested back into our community through engaging arts programming for people of all ages.*



## 2022 HIGHLIGHTS ...

### Ballet Under the Stars

Served over **10,000 people**  
 Total Program Cost: **\$481,111**

### Student Matinees

Served **4,357 students**  
 Total Program Cost: **\$136,217**

### Community Angel Night

Served **3,195 children and families**  
 Total Program Cost: **\$91,881**

### Class Act

Served **51 students**  
 Total Program Cost: **\$29,309**

### DanceAZ

Served **93 students**  
 Total Program Cost: **\$115,575**