

Corporate Spotlight:
*Sunbelt Insurance
Holdings*

Donor Spotlight:
Rita & Steven Schlosser

**Letter From the
Executive Director:**
Samantha Turner

Q&A:
*Artistic Director
Ib Andersen*

TURNING POINTE

New Works and World Premieres

made possible with support
from donors like you



Ballet Arizona dancers Arianni Martin and Helio Lima. Photo by Tim Fuller.

SPRING 2018



As we near the end of our 2017 – 2018 season, I want to thank you for your support.

As we near the end of our 2017 – 2018 season, I want to thank you for your support. Whether we are performing classics like *Swan Lake* and *Cinderella* or exploring the new dimensions created by contemporary works, this year has been a true testament to what this company is capable of achieving. We hope to see you at *All Balanchine*, an enticing selection of George Balanchine's greatest works. Also, please join us for our upcoming production at Desert Botanical Garden in the weeks following. I am so excited about this world premiere. The choreography just poured out of me and the music was my true inspiration.

In this issue, Executive Director Samantha Turner talks about the importance of your support. Every single donation matters and allows us to keep 30 professional dancers employed, attain and develop new and exciting works, and expand our community outreach efforts each and every season. We truly could not do it without you.

Meet our newest team member in the Education & Outreach department, Alexandra Papazian, who happens to be a former student of The School of Ballet Arizona! We are so grateful to the donors who funded this new position to help us expand our reach into the community and bring the joy of dance to as many people as possible. I can't wait to see all of the great things she will achieve for our company.

Finally, this season we say a fond farewell to beloved dancer, Natalia Magnicaballi. Over the past 16 years, Natalia has graced Ballet Arizona's stage in a multitude of leading roles, some of which I have created specifically for her. Natalia's final performance with Ballet Arizona will highlight her range and strength as an artist. You won't want to miss it!

I hope you enjoy this season's final issue of *Turning Pointe*. We cannot wait to see all of you again next season – it will be full of new works and world premieres – all of which are made possible by your support.

Gratefully,

Ib Andersen, Artistic Director

BEHIND THE SCENES with Ib Andersen

Q: Tell us about the lineup for *All Balanchine* this year.

A: *La Sonnambula*, *Prodigal Son*, & *Symphony in Three Movements*.

Natalia Magnicaballi wanted to perform *La Sonnambula* for her last piece with us, because she has such an affinity for this role. She has been important for Ballet Arizona during my time here and she was such a huge force in shaping the company. She will definitely be missed – she has been here almost as long as I have been – joining only one or two years later. We all wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors!

The score is glorious. The music is compiled from Bellini's opera *La Sonnambula*, and *Norma* and then from Rieti which he then orchestrated and made the score from those pieces. It's a murder mystery piece that is a bit romantic (in a creepy sort of way). The story is definitely a darker one – reminds me of something Edgar Allan Poe would have written.

Prodigal Son is one of the last ones created during Diaghilev's era (Ballets Russes) and he commissioned Prokofiev to do the score. This is actually based on the biblical story about a young man rebelling against his parents. He leaves home because he isn't satisfied with his life, so he goes out into the world and is crushed by it. Then he comes crawling back on his knees begging for forgiveness. Life teaches him that where he came from maybe wasn't so bad.

Q: You were praised repeatedly in your career for being very authentic in your roles and you are now known for trying to draw that authenticity out of your dancers. How do you do it?

A: It comes from my background with the Royal Danish Ballet, which has a long tradition of doing story ballets. Danes/Scandinavians are taught to not call attention to themselves – you are supposed to just BE. So when in these roles you don't act – you ARE. There is a big difference. That is what I'm after. Acting is annoying. Being is moving.

There is so much you are trying to convey in these roles and so many different parts of the characters. It means you really need to commit.

You need to believe in it, really understand it and give everything of yourself. This generation finds it very hard to commit because we live in a different world right now. People are very self-conscious and it is hard for them to truly be in a role 100%.

Q: Tell us everything we want to know about your world premiere – *Eroica*.

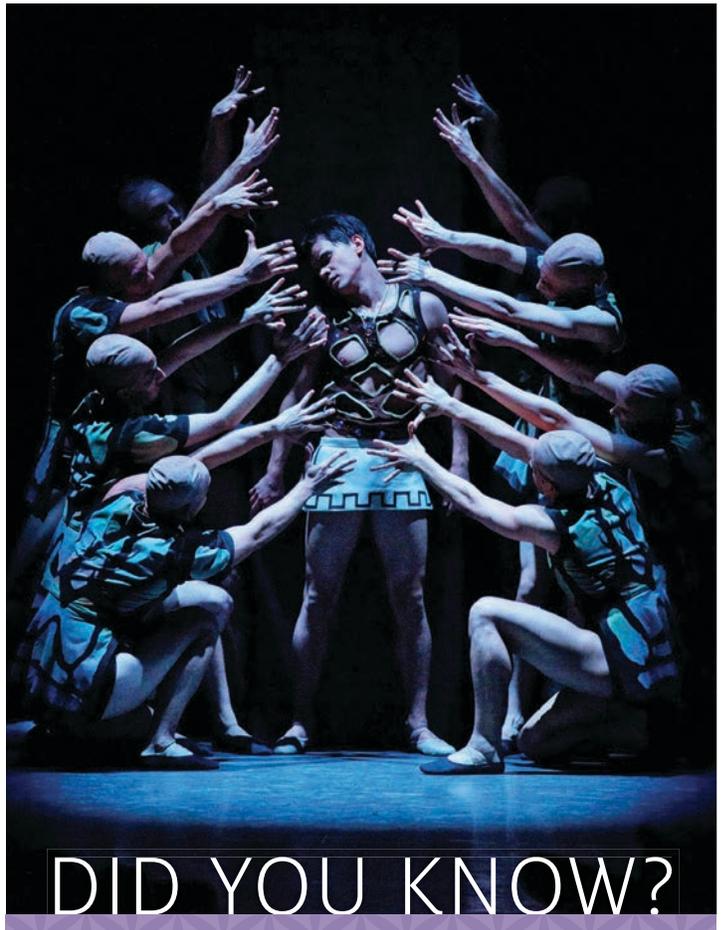
A: What can I tell you about it? Hmm...many things. It is literally about the music – Beethoven's Third Symphony is so complex. It's easy to listen to and be moved by, but to understand the structure is not easy. I am not sure I even really understand it! But I like that element of it. When it was written, it was revolutionary. Over 52 minutes long – the emotional content and level of complexity just hadn't been done before.

Eroica's choreography is about the past, present, and hopefully about the future. To a degree it is about our current political climate. The 1st and 2nd movements have the most meat and complexity including a funeral march. Then the 3rd and 4th movements are much more uplifting. They are a confirmation or belief that in human nature, good will survive over bad. This is not a story ballet, it's an emotional ballet. I want to connect on an emotional level. I want you to be moved and not even understand why you are feeling that way.

I am super excited about this one. I honestly don't understand how I did this. For me, I created this very quickly – it just sort of poured out of me. And I trusted what I did. I think it's because I'm so damn old. I go with my instinct now more than ever. I don't second guess my intuition as much. Now you just have to come and see!

Q: Some of your ballet masters/mistresses have said you choreograph as if you are painting a canvas – is there truth to that?

A: I have been painting for years, so I guess there is some truth to that. I see choreography as a stage (canvas) and you put people (or colors) on the stage and create a design. I am even more passionate about painting, sculpture and architecture than I am about ballet. Ballet is something I have done since I was 7, but I am not dying to see what other companies perform or seeking out new ballets. However, I am dying to see new exhibits. I will travel far and wide to see an exhibit, but I rarely travel to see a new ballet.



DID YOU KNOW?

Fun Facts about *All Balanchine*

- Igor Stravinsky originally composed the music used in *Symphony in Three Movements* for three different films, all of which were composed at different times. In the end however, they were never actually used on screen. The music expressed Stravinsky's impressions of World War II but he denied that the composition was programmatic in any way – a sentiment shared by Balanchine.
- *La Sonnambula* premiered in 1946 for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in New York City under the original title *Night Shadow*.
- *Prodigal Son* premiered on May 21, 1929 in Paris and was one of the first of Balanchine's ballets to achieve an international reputation.
- Sergei Prokofiev, who conducted the premiere of *Prodigal Son*, was upset by Balanchine's concept of the Siren. He thought the Siren should be demure, a radical difference to Balanchine's choreography.
- Artistic Director, Ib Andersen, made his *Prodigal Son* debut in 1986 and was said to be "especially eloquent" in the title role.

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.



Donor Spotlight

Rita & Steven Schlosser

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

Actually, we've only lived here for 4 years. However, we did support the ballet, opera and two theater companies in San Jose, California for the 15 years prior to moving to Arizona. We feel that nothing takes the place of live performances. The interaction between the performers and the audience creates an electricity that can't be matched by watching a film. We also know that many people don't share our enthusiasm for live theater. In fact, the San Jose Repertory Company, the San Jose Ballet and the San Jose Symphony closed within the past 4 years, all from lack of support from what must be one of the wealthiest communities in America.

Why do you give?

We feel a special affinity for ballet. It's an inspired blend of strength and grace where the dancers communicate emotion through silent movement. We've taken our grandchildren – now 4 and 11 – to various performances and rehearsals and are thrilled that they share our fascination with the ballet. In fact, our four-year-old grandson has specifically stated that we are to take him to *The Firebird*, which will be shown during the 2018-2019 season. I also like the programs presented by The School of Ballet Arizona. It is inspiring to know that Ballet Arizona is mentoring the next generation of dancers.

What ballets or contemporary works have inspired you the most?

That's a tough question to answer. We like *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*, and think that Ib Andersen's programs are excellent. We also like the creativity of the dancers who do choreography during the new works programs.

What are you most looking forward to next season?

Certainly, *The Firebird*. I'm also anticipating the *New Moves* program. I like seeing the styles of such a traditional art form incorporated in new and exciting ways.

Which ballet have you enjoyed most this season and why?

We love *Swan Lake*. It's the pathos, the love found and lost and the emotional content of the dance and the dancers. It never ceases to thrill us.

Any other comments you might like to contribute?

I only wish that the company could do more performances. Six times a year isn't enough. I also wish that we could have more ballets in outdoor venues. Arizona is a state of vistas. I'd like to see greater use of the natural environment that surrounds us on a daily basis.

Corporate Spotlight

Sunbelt Insurance Holdings

Believing in the power of the community, Sunbelt Insurance Holdings wants to create a stronger and healthier place to work and live. Sunbelt supports several non-profits in the Phoenix area including Ballet Arizona's upcoming performances of *Eroica* at the Desert Botanical Garden in May.

"Our team has an appreciation for art, athleticism and talent. Ballet Arizona is the perfect intersection of all three which is what draws us to the organization."

~ Ben Garland, President

As an insurance agency, Sunbelt provides a variety of services. From high risk to low risk, Sunbelt Insurance is a market leader in Workers Compensation with a focus on long term cost reduction. Sunbelt offers all types of commercial insurance as well. Supported by a unique client review process, the Sunbelt team ensures that all clients have the most "efficient" coverage — meaning maximum protection at the lowest possible cost.

Within their Workers Compensation program, Sunbelt assists complex customers in reducing the long term financial impact of claims and drastically reducing their long term premium costs.

As we prepare for our Desert Botanical Garden performances, we thank Sunbelt Insurance Holdings for its supports of this truly unique outdoor event and look forward to our continued partnership.



Ben Garland,
President





LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Samantha Turner

How are things at the ballet?

That’s a question frequently asked by our donors, patrons and members of the community who have an interest in Ballet Arizona. When they are asking the executive director, the question is usually about the financial well-being of the company.

I’m thrilled to be able to say that, while it’s always a struggle as a non-profit, Ballet Arizona is managing those challenges well. We have strong, engaged support from donors like you. We see tens of thousands of new and returning ticket buyers at performances each year.

It’s less than thrilling — frightening, really — when I get the following response: “That’s wonderful to hear. That means you don’t need my support any longer.” That can’t be any further from the truth.

The reason Ballet Arizona is succeeding in the challenging non-profit world is because of the support we receive from donors. That support is needed year in and year out.

Your sustaining support employs a professional company of 30 dancers that perform nearly 100 times each season — we hope to be able to do that again next season and the season after that. Your continued giving makes possible a season like 2018-2019 that includes three major new works — with aspirations to bring more new works of this scale in upcoming seasons. Your annual gift brings more than 6,000 children and families suffering hardships to a ballet performance each year to experience a moment of respite during difficult times.

For all of these to continue, so must donor support.

So if you happen to hear someone mention that Ballet Arizona no longer needs his or her support, please share with them that their continuing gift is critical to our ongoing mission. We want to always be able to answer the question “How are things going at the ballet?” with a grateful and enthusiastic “Wonderfully, thanks to you!”

Gratefully,

Samantha Turner, Executive Director





MEET ALEXANDRA PAPAZIAN

Donor Invests in Education & Outreach Department

Thanks to a generous gift from Barbara & Donald Ottosen, Ballet Arizona will reach twice the number of people through our outreach efforts and bring the joy of dance to many who do not have access to the arts. We welcome Alexandra Papazian, who will be leading these programs, growing them, and touching lives everywhere from Peoria to Gilbert.

I am originally from New York and moved to the Valley in 1997. At that time, my mother enrolled me in The School of Ballet Arizona and I loved it so much that I stayed for 13 years. After high school, I continued my ballet studies at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and Butler University. In 2012, I returned home to Phoenix and found fulfillment in helping others experience the joy of movement. From 2012-2017, I explored this new passion, graduated from ASU with a Bachelor's in Business-Communication, worked as a movement instructor, taught dance to children in the West Valley and performed with

local dance companies in my spare time. Now, I am excited to return to Ballet Arizona with my newfound passions, knowledge and experience.

What I love most about dance is how it questions human potential and provides endless opportunities for personal growth.

Dance had the power to connect me to myself and to others and I believe it can do the same for people of all backgrounds.

Dance sent me on a never ending journey of self-discovery, and more than that, helped me accept and understand that every day is a new

opportunity for growth – a trait I think serves me well in life.

In this age where technology and social media dominate our life experience, people (particularly kids) are becoming increasingly withdrawn and disconnected from themselves and from society. This issue of dissociation is only compounded by economic factors, and according to national studies – here in Arizona – we are currently faced with one of the highest youth disconnection rates in the country. Dance had the power to connect me to myself and to others and I believe it can do the same for people of all backgrounds. It is my hope to be able to bring dance to all communities by fostering partnerships with schools, organizations and governments to create an infrastructure that supports dance as a public good. Thank you for inviting me back to the Ballet Arizona family; it is my pleasure to support and serve.

THE SCHOOL OF BALLET ARIZONA'S SUMMER INTENSIVE



For most kids, summers are a time for vacations and days spent at water parks but for ballet students, summers present an opportunity to mix fun with rigor by attending a Summer Intensive program. The School of Ballet Arizona (SBAZ), like most major ballet schools, will be holding its sixth summer intensive from June 11th – July 20th.

The purpose of an intensive is twofold, benefiting our students and our school. For the students, it is an opportunity to grow and develop their skill as dancers. As to why the program is called an intensive, students from across the Valley and the country will grace the studios Monday through Friday from 8:45 am to 4:30 pm, taking 6 classes a day for 6 weeks straight. The curriculum varies from classical technique, pointe and pas de deux to jazz, modern and flamenco. Not only does the program expose students to new types of dance but it exposes them to students from different backgrounds who have trained in other techniques. For the school, it is an opportunity to grow our reputation on a local and national level.

Throughout the intensive, students will learn specific repertoire and pieces that will culminate in a performance held for their friends and families at Ballet Arizona's Dorrance Theatre. In addition to their dance classes, activities are set up for students to experience everything Phoenix has to offer. School Director Anthony Jones' wish for the Summer Intensive is "to be a rich program in and out of the studio, with students experiencing a diversity of classes and experiencing life in Phoenix. And of course for them to leave feeling they have learned something, enjoyed a fantastic summer and want to return. Plus, tell their friends about it!"

Photo by Brianne Bland.

A FOND FAREWELL *Natalia Magnicaballi*

Adored dancer, Natalia Magnicaballi, will make her final curtain call with Ballet Arizona at the *All Balanchine* performance on Sunday, May 6th. A principal dancer with two companies, The Suzanne Farrell Ballet at the Kennedy Center since 1999 and with Ballet Arizona since 2002, Magnicaballi's career has been a whirlwind. Originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina, her passion and talent earned her a place at the Teatro Colón Institute, one of the most prestigious opera houses in the world. At the age of 19, she became a principal dancer with Julio Bocca's Ballet Argentino and then joined Italy's Aterballetto under the direction of Mauro Bitgonzetti.

Magnicaballi has a broad and impressive repertoire under her belt, including the lead role in 36 Balanchine creations such as *Apollo*, *Tzigane*, *Agon*, *Serenade*, and *Jewels* to name a few. She has also danced the leads in beloved classical ballets such as *Swan Lake*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *Giselle*, as well as many other works and premieres by renowned choreographers Jiri Kylian, Christopher Wheeldon, Alexei Ratmansky, and of course our very own Ib Andersen. Magnicaballi has performed across the country, and in the major houses and arena theaters around 5 continents, including the Paris Opera Garnier, the Mariinsky Theatre in Russia, Tokyo International Forum, and the Cairo Opera House. She has also been reviewed by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Pointe Magazine*. *Dance Magazine* featured Natalia as one of their "25 to Watch," and *The Arizona Republic*, named her "Best Dancer."

In her final performance with Ballet Arizona, Natalia will perform the lead roles of The Siren in *Prodigal Son* and The Sleepwalker in *La Sonnambula*, one of Magnicaballi's most beloved Balanchine ballets, thus bringing her time with Ballet Arizona full circle.



Ballet Arizona dancer Natalia Magnicaballi in *La Sonnambula*. Choreography by George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.

Q&A *with Natalia Magnicaballi*

Q: With 36 Balanchine ballets in your repertoire (more than any other principal dancer outside of New York City Ballet) and the unique opportunity of dancing for two of Balanchine's protégées – Ib Andersen and Suzanne Farrell – can you describe what it is like to learn and perform Balanchine's works?

A: I love to dance, but when it comes to Mr. Balanchine's ballet, it's more than love, it's my second nature to dance his creations – it really feels like home. The reason I came to Phoenix was to work with Mr. Andersen. It's been a privilege for me to work with him here and simultaneously with Suzanne Farrell at the Kennedy Center, as a principal dancer for so long – 16 years with Ib and 19 years with Suzanne. They were the last protégées of the Master, and I'm a lucky girl for having directly received all their knowledge throughout all these years.

Q: Having danced at Ballet Arizona for 16 years, can you share some of the roles or moments on stage that have had the most impact on you?

A: This is a really tough question, because I danced so many ballets during my 16 years with the company, and it would not be fair to mention just one. Every single ballet and role I danced with Ballet Arizona is very special to me. I know it sounds cliché, but it's the truth.

Q: Do you have a message for your fans that have followed your career thus far?

A: I can only say thank you for their wonderful support and I look forward to dancing for them for many more years. I am very grateful to my local fan base – a wonderful audience which has been constantly growing since I joined the company 16 years ago and which made me feel at home every time I danced for them here. When I first joined Ballet Arizona I knew the company was going through a very difficult time with very weak financials and little audience. But I did not hesitate, because I wanted to work with Ib. Together Ib and I were able to help Ballet Arizona develop a huge audience and following – including several of my east coast and northwest fans who have been traveling to Phoenix to watch me dance since I joined the company. They helped spread the word countrywide about the beautiful work we were doing here. It has been a wonderful and beyond rewarding experience for me.

BALLET ARIZONA 2017–2018 SEASON UPCOMING DONOR EVENTS

May 3 – 6 (All Prima Circle Members) | Symphony Hall
Intermission Receptions at *All Balanchine*

May 6
Natalia Magnicaballi's Farewell Performance

May 10 (\$1,000 & Up) | Desert Botanical Garden
Eroica Rehearsal Viewing

May 15 (All Prima Circle Members) | Desert Botanical Garden
Joint Opening Night Reception

May 15 – June 2 Desert Botanical Garden
Eroica – An Evening at Desert Botanical Garden

May 26 – 27 Orpheum Theatre
School of Ballet Arizona's Spring Performance

September 7 (All Prima Circle Members)
New Moves Studio Spotlight Reception & Performance

BALLET
ARIZONA

IB ANDERSEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Ballet Arizona presents

ALL BALANCHINE

May 3 – 6, 2018, at Symphony Hall

Three of the most important ballets of the twentieth century choreographed by George Balanchine, the father of American ballet. Experience the haunting magic, treacherous seduction, and artistic innovation in these masterpieces of movement and music.

Prodigal Son brings us a story of a rebellious youth, a treacherous seductress, and a father's unconditional love.

Pairing the legacy of Balanchine with the mastery of Stravinsky, ***Symphony in Three Movements*** is a complex and energizing tribute to movement and music.

Balanchine unfolds a haunting tale of the Sleepwalker and the grave misfortune she brings in ***La Sonnambula***

Tickets: balletaz.org | 602.381.1096

