

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The School of Ballet Arizona and Phoenix Youth Symphony Orchestras Unite to Showcase ‘Raymonda’

Local Performance Highlights Student Talent June 3-4 at the Madison Center for the Arts

PHOENIX – The [School of Ballet Arizona](#) and the [Phoenix Youth Symphony Orchestras](#) are thrilled to come together once again to present *Raymonda* at The Madison Center for the Arts June 3-4. This production demonstrates and celebrates the remarkable accomplishments of both organizations and gives audiences the rare opportunity to experience a show by the next generation of performing artists in Phoenix. Both organizations are proud to provide their students with the distinct training ability to perform alongside one another.

Get a glimpse of the progression in ballet and musical training from intermediate to advanced-level students on the verge of professional careers, as they perform this timeless ballet. *Raymonda* tells the story of a young countess who must navigate the complexities of love and loyalty in medieval France. With stunning costumes, intricate choreography, and an unforgettable score by Alexander Glazunov, *Raymonda* captures the attention and hearts of many.

“It’s an experience like no other, a rite of passage in every dancer’s career,” said Maria Simonetti, the director of The School of Ballet Arizona. “When I was introduced to Matthew Kasper [artistic director of Phoenix Youth Symphony Orchestras], I knew we could make magic happen. As we approach our fourth combined performance, I am so proud of all that we have accomplished and the incredible experience this continued partnership has provided our students.”

The School of Ballet Arizona is the only professional school to offer live music through a youth symphony orchestra with its performances. In addition to performing works choreographed for professional companies, students have the unique opportunity to perform with live music for both its Spring and Fall showcases that will help prepare them for professional level productions. From primary to pre-professional levels, each student will showcase their talents and training from the wide variety of classes available at SBAZ.

Young musicians in the Youth Symphony enjoy weekly rehearsals led by world-class conductors, sectionals coached by professional musicians, weekend retreats, and the opportunity to perform before thousands of audience members in the highest-quality venues throughout the Valley. Through this partnership, these musicians can also hone their skill for playing in time with the dancers.

The School of Ballet Arizona has partnered with the Phoenix Youth Symphony Orchestra for the inaugural performance of *Swan Lake* with three sold-out performances at the Desert Botanical

Garden in May of 2021. In addition, this partnership continued with *The Sleeping Beauty* in May of 2022 and Ballet Arizona's Fall Showcase in November 2022.

Tickets for *Raymonda* go on sale May 8 and will be available at balletaz.org or by calling 602.381.1096.

Ballet Arizona

Ballet Arizona 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.

Phoenix Youth Symphony Orchestras

Phoenix Youth Symphony Orchestras exists to Expand Horizons Through Music and develop the next generation of Artists, Patrons, and Leaders. We seek to encourage social and emotional development, contribute to our community through inclusive recruitment and instill long-life values of responsibility, cultural appreciation, and a pursuit of excellence. PYSO was founded in 1952 and its orchestral training program, Young Musicians Competition and education initiatives have steadily grown over their nearly seventy-year existence. PYSO serves between 250 and 300 talented young musicians in its training program each year and reaches over 7,000 young students annually with its education initiatives. The young musicians enjoy weekly rehearsals led by world-class conductors, sectionals coached by professional musicians, weekend retreats and the opportunity to perform before thousands of audience members in most prestigious venues in the valley. PYSO now includes six ensembles: The Symphony Orchestra, The Philharmonic Orchestra, The String Orchestra, The Prelude String Orchestra, The Wind Orchestra and Percussion Ensemble. Visit pysorchestras.org for more information.

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