

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Amber Godbehre**Phone:** 602-321-0492**Email:** Amber@evolveprandmarketing.com**Ballet Arizona's Annual Dance With Me Gala Raised \$530,000***Performances, Cocktails and More Highlight the Charitable Evening on April 5*

**PHOENIX** – [Ballet Arizona](#) hosted its annual Dance With Me Gala on Friday, April 5 at the Phoenix Art Museum. This memorable event was chaired by Kate Groves and celebrated the 24-year legacy of Artistic Director Ib Andersen, as he concludes his final season. The Diane & Bruce Halle Foundation were the evening's honorees in recognition of their unwavering commitment to the community and Ballet Arizona. This year's gala raised \$530,000 in support of Ballet Arizona's professional dance company and its upcoming season of performances as well as its education and community engagement programs.

Guests enjoyed a breathtaking performance of Andersen's *Rio*, which premiered for the first time in 2017. Set to Philip Glass's "Days and Nights in Rocinha," *Rio* explores the movement and vivacity found in Brazilian culture, featuring vibrant costumes and dynamic choreography. Inspired by samba, this playful ballet recalls the joy of the country of Brazil.

"It was an honor to chair this year's Dance With Me Gala, which honored the generous philanthropy of The Diane & Bruce Halle Foundation who have been such extraordinary supporters of our ballet," said Groves. "In addition, it was a delight to chair the Gala in Ib Andersen's 24th and final season as we honored him as Artistic Director of Ballet Arizona and welcomed him as Emeritus Artistic Director."

Groves and executive director, Jami Kozemczak, welcomed guests and spoke of the legacy of Ib Andersen, while Tom Egan, the executive director of [The Diane & Bruce Halle Foundation](#), spoke of the impact Ballet Arizona has on the community. Isabella Seo and Gabriel Wright were awarded the "Hazel Hare Award for Artistic Excellence." In its sixth year, the Hazel Hare Award honors dancers whose spirit echoes the strength, dedication, and passion that Hare exemplified throughout her entire life.

Following the performance of *Rio* and dinner, guests took the dance floor with the professional dancers for the remainder of the evening. This is a tradition from with *Dance With Me* receives its name.

Ballet Arizona would like to thank its sponsors The Diane & Bruce Halle Foundation, Jacquie and Bennett Dorrance, and Carole and Arte Moreno.

Ballet Arizona is the official ballet company of the state of Arizona, whose mission is to ignite the human spirit through the magic of dance. The company is dedicated to preserving and celebrating classical dance while creating and commissioning new innovative works. For more information about Ballet Arizona, visit [www.balletaz.org/](http://www.balletaz.org/).

**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 22,000 children and families every year through its free and low-cost outreach programs. For more information, visit [balletaz.org](http://balletaz.org).

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