

Q&A:
Artistic Director
Daniela Cardim

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

Production Feature:
Swan Lake

Fond Farewell:
Jillian Barrell

TURNING POINTE

An Exciting Path Ahead

With you as our partner,
we will inspire, create, and
make a lasting impact.



Ballet Arizona dancers Jillian Barrell and Brian Leonard. Photo by Alexander Iziliaev.



WELCOME *Daniela Cardim*

"I am honored to have been chosen to be Ballet Arizona's artistic director."

Q&A *with Daniela Cardim*

Q: Tell us about yourself and what drew you to pursue a life in the arts?

A: I remember being very little, and my mom asked if I wanted to take a ballet class. I said yes and started training at a small private ballet school in my home country of Brazil. I loved it and knew from then on that I wanted to be a dancer. Of course you don't know if it's going to work out, but I became really dedicated and have never looked back.

My family was also very supportive. My grandmother used to make my costumes and sew the ribbons on my pointe shoes. Having their backing helped a lot because this is not an easy path to choose, it can be unpredictable.

My teacher, Eliana Karin, was excellent. She was Brazilian and had an amazing international career, dancing in Russia with the now Mariinsky Theatre and also with the Stuttgart Ballet in Germany. She trained me in the Vaganova method, which is a Russian technique that gave me a really strong foundation.

From an early age, Eliana took a small group of us (people I am still friends with today!) and had us perform everywhere, in festivals and competitions. We were very good and won a lot of prizes. When I was 17, I was awarded a scholarship at the Princess Grace Dance Academy in Monte Carlo.

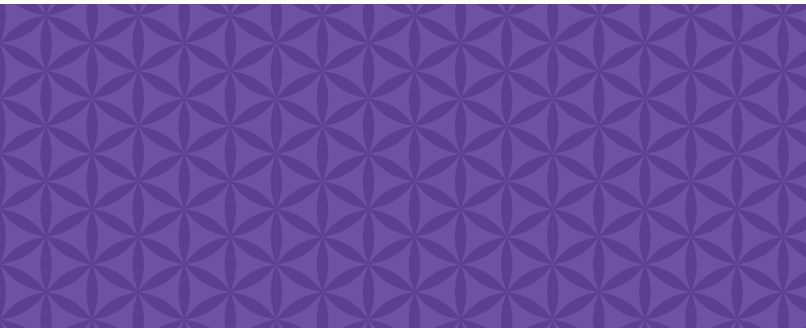
My professional career started when I joined the Ballet of Municipal Theatre of Rio de Janeiro, which was a special moment, since I watched the company growing up.

The director at the time, Jean-Yves Lormeau, was from the Paris Opera and he had brought a lot of their repertoire over, including some Balanchine. It was a completely eye opening experience. As a dancer, I improved so much because my technique was growing... the French give a lot of emphasis to footwork, whereas the Russians give an emphasis to the upper body and strong technique.

I then joined the Dutch National Ballet and that was another "wow" moment. It was so different from what I knew in Brazil. They have ballet masters from all of the different techniques and schools across the world. The repertoire was so vast and I was introduced to Frederick Ashton's very British, very pure style, August Bournonville's Danish style, and even more Balanchine works.

Throughout my career I have been able to perform so many incredible roles and ballets. Myrta in *Giselle*, Carabosse in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Vaslav Nijinsky's *L'après-midi d'un Faune*, and Serge Lifar's *Suite en Blanc*, are just a few that will always hold a special place in my heart. There is nothing like the feeling of being on stage and giving a role or performance everything you have.

It was also during this time that I found another passion – choreography. I had done some smaller things when I was 16 or 17 in Brazil, but my first commission was for the Dutch National Ballet School. Since then I have created works for West Australian Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, Poznan Opera Ballet, and a few others.



I also thought about what lies in my future and pursued a degree in arts management at London South Bank University. I started applying those skills when I joined New English Ballet Theatre in London, where I served in a variety of leadership roles. It was a wonderful experience because I got to really understand what goes into making an arts organization function. This art form is what I have dedicated my life to and I want to learn and do all that I can to keep it alive.

Q: What are your plans for Ballet Arizona?

A: First, I am honored to have been chosen to be Ballet Arizona’s artistic director. Although I have only been a part of this community for a short time, it has been wonderful so far. As a dancer, choreographer, and with my experience as a manager, it is very exciting to come to an organization that has such an incredible pool of talent.

I plan to honor Ballet Arizona’s past and the beautiful legacy Ib Andersen created. This company already has a rich and enticing repertoire and we will continue the classical ballet tradition by performing favorite storybooks. I will also bring masterpieces of the 20th and 21st centuries to our audiences. I want us to become an extraordinary creative hub.



West Australian Ballet dancers Chihiro Nomura and Julio Blanes in Daniela Cardim's *Reset*. Photo by Bradbury Photography.



NEBT dancers in Daniela Cardim's *Baroque Encounters*. Photo by Ash.



A Fond Farewell Jillian Barrell

After 16 seasons, Company Dancer, Jillian Barrell, made her final curtain call with Ballet Arizona at the end of the 2023-2024 season.

Jillian began her training at Delaware Dance Company and later studied with Sherry Hiott, continuing her education during the summers at several prestigious schools, including Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and Orlando Ballet School. She was a finalist in the 2004-05 and 2005-06 Kennedy Center Ballet Class Series and a soloist in the 2006 Youth America Grand Prix finals in New York City.

Since joining Ballet Arizona in 2007, Jillian has originated the title role in Ib Andersen’s *Cinderella* and performed numerous principal roles in *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and *Giselle*. She has danced featured roles in George Balanchine’s *La Sonnambula*, *The Four Temperaments*, *La Valse*, *Apollo*, *Divertimento No. 15*, and *Rubies* from *Jewels*, as well as in Ib Andersen’s original works *Play*, *Mosiak*, and the premiere of *Diversions* at the Kennedy Center.

Jillian has been an audience favorite and was recognized by *The New York Times* for her “youthful sparkle”. Ballet Arizona is grateful for her artistry and dedication, which have left a lasting impression on the Arizona stage and her fellow dancers.

Q&A with Jillian Barrell

Q: How does it feel to retire after 16 seasons?

A: I feel all the things! There is a little disbelief – dancing was my life for such a long time and retiring was a decision that came about very recently. I feel accomplished and proud of myself. Mostly, I am so grateful for the career that I had and now for the opportunity I have to spend more time with my daughters.

Q: Are there any roles or moments on stage that have had the most impact on you?

A: Every role and experience you have on stage shapes you as a dancer. I have truly enjoyed almost every role, but I think the “firsts” always stand out.

Ib’s *Romeo & Juliet* is one of my absolute favorite ballets. It feels so good to dance and Ib is an

incredible coach. Nayon Iovino and I danced it together when we first met and we fell in love while we were rehearsing, it was a really special time! We performed it again just after we got engaged and then for a third time after our first daughter was born. That one is very special for me.

I’ve performed an extensive amount of Balanchine ballets and I’ve loved every single one! I could dance *Slaughter on 10th Avenue* and *Symphony in Three Movements* all day, every day. *Rubies* is another special one because it was the first ballet Nayon and I danced together when he joined the company in 2012!

Q: What do you envision for life after Ballet Arizona?

A: I have not had much time to envision what life will look like... I want to still be involved in the

ballet world and I would love to have the opportunity to pass along some of the knowledge that I have gained throughout my career.

For right now, I am just soaking up the extra time with my girls before they get older and feel like this is exactly what I am supposed to be doing. Nayon and I are also working to expand our real estate portfolio and build a small business. The future feels exciting and full of possibility!



Jillian Barrell in *Cinderella*. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.

To learn more about our Legacy for Dance Society and how you can ensure Ballet Arizona thrives for future generations, please contact Steven Henderson at 602.343.6520 or shenderson@balletaz.org.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jami Kozemczak

Our Strategic Plan Unveiled

As we reflect on the remarkable journey we've undertaken, I am proud to share the success of Ballet Arizona's completed strategic plan and the exciting path ahead. Our transformation over the past several years, driven by our vision of **Ballet for Everyone**, has laid the groundwork for artistic innovation, expanded community engagement, and financial sustainability. We've made great strides toward enhancing our local and national presence, setting the stage for even greater achievements. The strategic priorities we pursued have become the foundation upon which we build our future.

FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: A PATH TO EXCELLENCE

1. Artistic Vision and Programming

Under Daniela Cardim's artistic direction, Ballet Arizona has embraced a bold vision. From expanding our repertoire to include timeless classics and new works, solidifying our place as a creative hub, to multi-year season planning, we will ensure Ballet Arizona remains at the forefront of artistic excellence.

2. Patron Expansion

Making ballet accessible to all is central to our mission and we hope to grow our audience base and increase brand awareness both locally and beyond. Through enriching experiences at mainstage performances and community programs, we have touched lives across Arizona. This success is just the beginning as we explore new venues and touring opportunities to reach even more communities.

3. Financial Sustainability

Financial stability is a key focus, and I am thrilled to report significant growth, including a doubling of our endowment and continued strong ticket sales of *The Nutcracker*. Our most critical goal is solving the structural deficit issues that plague most large performing arts organizations. Through thoughtful planning, we will optimize our revenue streams to ensure Ballet Arizona remains financially resilient and ready to seize future opportunities.

4. Operational Excellence

Behind-the-scenes investments in infrastructure, like staffing and technology, have transformed our operations, improving efficiency and enhancing the experience for everyone

involved with Ballet Arizona. By focusing on employee compensation, professional development, and system upgrades, we've laid a strong foundation for future growth.

5. School of Ballet Arizona Optimization

The School of Ballet Arizona (SBAZ) has transformed into one of the region's top programs through a renewed focus on curriculum, faculty support, and student enrollment. With plans to expand our main campus and explore partnerships, we aim to offer high-quality ballet training to even more aspiring dancers, building on our success to provide exceptional opportunities for students at all levels.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

Looking to the future, I am filled with optimism. Our success is a testament to the unwavering support of our donors, patrons, and community. Together, we've built a legacy that honors Ballet Arizona's history while embracing new possibilities. Our next chapter will focus on artistic innovation, deeper community engagement, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

I invite you to join us on this journey. With you as our partner, we will inspire, create, and make a lasting impact on the cultural landscape of Arizona and this beloved art form.

With gratitude and excitement,

Jami Kozemczak, Executive Director





Natalia Magnicaballi in Ib Andersen's Swan Lake. Photo by Rosale O'Connor

CELEBRATING CLASSICS

The art of ballet has spanned centuries and while we live in a fast-changing cultural landscape, the continued performance of classical masterpieces is vital for preserving its rich heritage. Works like *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Giselle* have captivated audiences worldwide and represent the pinnacle of classical technique, artistry, and storytelling.

When *Swan Lake* premiered in 1877, it was initially deemed an artistic failure, but it changed the landscape of ballet forever. Not only was this Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's first ballet composition, the score was the first of its kind. Tchaikovsky created an intricate symphonic story that ushered in a new era where music became integral to the unfolding of the dramatic narrative.

By maintaining classic works in their repertoire, companies ensure that new generations of dancers and viewers experience the beauty, complexity, and historical significance of these timeless productions. Moreover, storybook ballets serve as an entry point for many people into the world of dance. Their narratives, often drawn from fairy tales, myths, and legends, resonate with universal themes of love, sacrifice, transformation, and triumph.

"Swan Lake is one of the greatest ballets ever," says Rehearsal Director, Maria Simonetti. *"It has survived over 147 years and is still beloved... that means something. Putting Swan Lake on the*

stage is incredibly challenging but it is so gratifying and being a part of keeping these traditions alive is an honor."

For dancers, performing these classics are coveted and unforgettable experiences, but it is so much more than that. These ballets represent the foundation of the art form and are critical in a dancer's development, enabling them to better understand the technical precision, emotional depth, and artistic expression demanded by the genre.

Another important aspect of classical ballets is their role in sustaining companies financially and culturally. These productions contribute to a company's identity and prestige while their popularity makes them staples of the season, providing financial stability through ticket sales. However, there are a number of challenges companies face due to the high costs of production. From sets and costumes, to the unparalleled experience of live music, classical ballets are expensive to stage and require ongoing investment.

A key part of Ballet Arizona's identity is our dedication to preserving the traditions of classical ballet. *Swan Lake*, especially, holds a special place in our company's history as the first full-length ballet we performed. While we seek to expand our repertoire, this balance between tradition and innovation is imperative and we are grateful for your support which keeps our art form alive and thriving.

SWAN LAKE BY THE NUMBERS



Materials & Supplies:
\$23K



Staff & Labor:
\$65K



Costumes & Pointe Shoes:
\$7K



Design, Photography, & Security:
\$14K



TOTAL COST:
\$325K

Stage, Lighting, & Venue Equipment:
\$213K



Transportation & Travel:
\$3K



Nayon Iovino and Ariani Martin in Ib Andersen's *Swan Lake*. Photo by Alexander Iziliaev.



DID YOU KNOW?

Strategic Tools *For Your Charitable Giving*

With just a few months left in 2024, we are sharing one of the ways you can make the most out of your charitable giving!

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) are a popular, tax-advantaged way to donate directly from IRAs to charities like Ballet Arizona. Here are a few benefits of donating through a QCD:

Tax Benefits

QCDs provide a tax-efficient way for individuals aged 70½ or older to donate directly from their IRAs. A key benefit is that the donated amount can be excluded from taxable income, unlike regular charitable donations, which require itemization for deductions.

Satisfies Required Minimum Distributions

Individuals aged 73 and older must take Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from their IRAs. A QCD can satisfy your RMD while avoiding taxes, allowing you to meet both your philanthropic goals and RMD obligations.

Maximize Giving Power

QCDs enable tax-free charitable giving, maximizing your gift's impact. If you withdraw funds, pay taxes, and then donate, the charity receives less. With a QCD, you transfer the full donation amount directly to the charity.

BALLET ARIZONA 2024–2025 SEASON
UPCOMING DONOR EVENTS

October 23 (\$3,500 & Up)
Swan Lake Dress Rehearsal Viewing

October 24 – 27 | Symphony Hall
Swan Lake

October 24 – 27 (All Prima Circle Members) | Symphony Hall
Intermission Receptions at *Swan Lake* (except Sunday Evening)

October 24 – 27 (\$5,000 & Up) | Symphony Hall
Backstage Tour at *Swan Lake*

November 13 (All Members) | Ballet Arizona
Legacy for Dance Rehearsal & Luncheon

December 6 – 24 | Symphony Hall
The Nutcracker

January 17 (\$2,500 & Up)
Company Class Viewing

January 31 (All Prima Circle Members) | Ballet Arizona
Prima Circle Evening & *Frida* Studio Spotlight

February 7 | Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts
Dance With Me – A Ballet Arizona Gala

BALLET
ARIZONA

2835 E. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85034

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Phoenix, AZ
Permit No. 1858

U.S. Premiere

FRIDA

February 13 – 16, 2025
with *The Phoenix Symphony*
at *Symphony Hall*

Tickets:
balletaz.org
602.381.1096

Produced by
Jacquie and Bennett Dorrance
and **Bob Benson**

Opening Night Series Sponsor

F. Francis &
Dionne Najafi



Sponsored in part by



Photo © Hans Gerritsen. Courtesy of Dutch National Ballet.