

# ALICE (IN WONDERLAND)

February 12 – 15, 2026

with The Phoenix Symphony at Symphony Hall



Ballet Arizona dancer Isabella Seo.  
Photos by Ed Flores, photo composite  
by Angie Slade Design.

Opening Night Series Sponsor



F. Francis &  
Dionne Najafi

Sponsored in part by



*Choreography by* Septime Webre

*Staged by* Johanna Bernstein Wilt and Jared Nelson

*Music by* Matthew Pierce

*The Phoenix Symphony conducted by* Matthew Kasper

*Scenic Design by* James Kronzer

*Costume Design by* Liz Vandal

*Puppetry Design by* Eric Van Wyk

*Lighting Design by* Clifton Taylor

*Lighting recreated by* Andrew C. McDaniels

**Please see insert for casting.**

## PRIMA CIRCLE MEMBERS

Please join us during intermission for the Prima Circle reception in the lobby.

# Synopsis

## ACT I

### PROLOGUE

Alice daydreams as her family swirls around her chaotically. She is mesmerised by the mysterious and quirky Lewis Carroll, a family friend, who takes Alice on a boat ride and picnic in the country.

### DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

During the picnic, Alice drifts off to sleep while listening to a story of a little girl's adventures in a wonderland. A White Rabbit hops by, quickly leaps into a rabbit hole and Alice follows, falling for what seems like miles. Alice lands with a thud in a hallway. She drinks a potion and grows quite tall; she fans herself and shrinks quite small. When Alice eats some cake and returns to normal size, she can no longer fit through the tiny door.

### POOL OF TEARS AND THE CAUCUS RACE

Frightened and confused, Alice cries a pool of tears. The Dormouse swims by and befriends Alice. Then a Dodo Bird, an Eaglet and a flock of Flamingos plop into the pool. The Dodo Bird decides the best way to dry everyone is to dance a Caucus Race.

### PIG AND PEPPER

Alice then meets a Fish and a Frog footman delivering an invitation to the Duchess, who is agitated because the Cook has put too much pepper into the soup. Alice sees Duchess' babies suddenly turn into pigs!



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## THE CHESHIRE CAT, ADVICE FROM A CATERPILLAR, THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY

Later, Alice meets a Cheshire Cat, who appears and disappears, and a Caterpillar who smokes a hookah pipe and transforms into a butterfly. Next, Alice stumbles into a chaotic tea party with the Mad Hatter, the March Hare and the Dormouse.

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### INTERMISSION

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## ACT II

### QUEEN'S GARDEN PARTY AND CROQUET GAME

Meanwhile, card gardeners accidentally planted white roses in the Queen's red rose garden. Fearing her wrath, they paint the roses red. The Queen invites Alice to play a game of croquet using Flamingo mallets and Hedgehogs as croquet balls. Blaming the Hedgehogs for losing the match, the Queen proclaims, "Off with their heads!". Alice saves the Hedgehogs and the angry Queen chases her into the forest.

### TWEEDLE DUM AND TWEEDLE DEE AND THE JABBERWOCK

In the forest, Alice happens upon a Rocking-Horse-Fly, a Bread-and-Butterfly and beautiful Snap-Dragon-Flies. Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum playfully argue as they pass by. Alice and her friends are suddenly threatened by the ultimate danger: the Queen's Jabberwock. To protect her new friends, Alice slays the beast.

### THE TRIAL AND HOME AGAIN

Back at the Queen's palace, Alice is arrested and put on trial for her crime. Utter confusion breaks out in the court as the Queen shouts, "Off with her head!". When Alice realizes the silliness of the Queen and her court, they fall like a house of cards. She awakens from her dream and finds herself at home.





# Biographies

## SEPTIME WEBRE, *Choreographer*

Septime Webre is an internationally recognized ballet director, choreographer, educator and advocate. He joined Hong Kong Ballet as its Artistic Director in July 2017 after 17 years as Artistic Director of The Washington Ballet from 1999-2016, and six years as Artistic Director for the American Repertory Ballet in Princeton from 1993-1999. Webre's new works for Hong Kong Ballet, *Romeo + Juliet*, set in 1960s Hong Kong, and *The Nutcracker*, set in 1920s Hong Kong, world premiered in June 2021 and December 2021 respectively. The latter work also won him Outstanding Choreography at the 2022 Hong Kong Dance Awards. As a dancer, Webre was featured in solo and principal roles from the classical repertoire as well as in contemporary works by choreographers such as Twyla Tharp, Paul Taylor and Merce Cunningham. He has served on the juries of a number of international ballet competitions. He has served on the board of Dance/USA and his work has received numerous honors, grants and awards. He holds a degree in History/Pre-Law from the University of Texas at Austin, and is the seventh son in a large, boisterous Cuban-American family. In 2024, he joins the jury for the Asia-Pacific preselection of the Prix de Lausanne, which takes place in Macau from September 27 to 29.

## MATTHEW PIERCE, *Composer*

Composer/Violinist Matthew Pierce is celebrated for his new classical scores commissioned and performed by American ballet companies. Born in Brooklyn in 1968, Pierce grew up in Seattle, studied violin performance at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and moved to New York where he began writing music for the theater. He has worked alongside choreographer Septime Webre for productions like *Alice (In Wonderland)* and *The Wizard of Oz*. In 2019 Pierce was invited to the stage of the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, Russia as a nominee for the Prix Benois de la Danse (International Ballet Prize) as composer of *The Wizard of Oz*. Other dance and theater collaborators include Julia Adam (San Francisco Ballet), Stanton Welch (Houston Ballet), David Palmer (Washington Ballet), Yanis Pikieris (Miami Youth Ballet), Christopher Stowell (National Ballet of Canada), Matthew Neenan (Ballet Memphis), Robert Dekkers (Post:Ballet), Melissa Barak (School of American Ballet). As a violinist he toured with the Mark Morris Dance Group and performed on recordings by pop artists Jewel, Sheryl Crow and Suzanne Vega and on Philip Glass' score, *Kundun*.

## ERIC J VAN WYK, *Puppet Designer*

Eric J. Van Wyk received his M.F.A. in Scenic Design from the University of Maryland-College Park and his B.A. in Fine Arts from Dordt University and has studied puppetry and movement with Sandglass Theatre. His puppetry and scenic designs have been featured at Open Eye Figure Theatre, Children's Theatre Co., Imagination Stage, The National Theatre in Washington, D.C., The White House, The Washington Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet and The Hong Kong Ballet. His company WonderStruck Theatre Co. created *Mop Dog* and received two Jim Henson grants; including one for *The Elephant speaks Jazz's* world premiere. His designs for *The Big Friendly Giant* received a Helen Hayes Award, and he thanks his family for their inspiration.

## **LIZ VANDAL**, *Costume Designer*

Liz Vandal began her career as a self-taught fashion designer, quickly gaining recognition for her innovative and original approach to costume design in dance, circus, film, and large-scale events. A passionate educator and speaker, she has shared her expertise with numerous international organizations, inspiring emerging creators worldwide. Vandal has collaborated with some of the most celebrated choreographers and dance companies globally, including Marie Chouinard, Margie Gillis, the Paris Opera, and the Hong Kong Ballet, showcasing her versatility and creative vision. Her dynamic relationship with Cirque du Soleil has resulted in dazzling costumes for productions such as *OVO*, *Viaggio*, *Sonor*, *Cosmos*, and *Excentick*, each reflecting her bold, flamboyant aesthetic. Beyond the circus, she designed over 3,000 costumes for the closing ceremony of the 2015 European Games in Baku, Azerbaijan, and crafted elegant costumes for the opening ceremony of the Lake Placid FISU World University Games. Vandal's two-decade collaboration with Artistic Director Septime Webre continues to shine, with celebrated productions like *The Wizard of Oz*, *Peter Pan*, and *Alice in Wonderland*. Her exceptional work has earned her the Award for Best Costume Design at the Hong Kong Dance Awards and a nomination for Les Benois de la Danse.

## **JAMES KRONZER**, *Scenic Design*

Scenic Designer James Kronzer resides in Washington DC, and Italy. His theater credits include Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional productions of *Sweeney Todd* at the Denver Center; *All The Way* at St. Louis Rep, and several shows for Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. He has designed scenery for The Washington Ballet and Hong Kong Ballet. He has also designed scenery for Disney Cruise Lines *Twice Charmed* and has shows running on twelve ships on the Norwegian Cruise Line. He has designed over 300 standup comedy specials with many noted comics such as Jim Gaffigan, Tom Papa, Tiffany Haddish, and Ali Wong, to name a few. These appear on networks such as Comedy Central, Showtime, HBO, and Netflix. Kronzer has received eight Helen Hayes Awards in Washington, DC, and two Barrymore Awards in Philadelphia and has been nominated for an Art Director's Guild Award. His works can be seen at [jameskronzer.com](http://jameskronzer.com).

## **CLIFTON TAYLOR**, *Lighting Design*

Clifton Taylor has created theatrical designs for Broadway as well as opera, theater and dance companies around the world. His designs have been commissioned for the repertoires of the Mikhailovsky Theater, Russia; Sardono Dance Theater, Indonesia; The London Philharmonia, UK; The Hamburg Elbe Philharmonie, Germany; American Ballet Theater, US; Scottish National Ballet, UK; the Ballet Company of Rio de Janeiro, Brasil; Maggio Danza, Italy; Ballet de Lorraine, France as well as other major companies in Europe, Asia and South America. Taylor is particularly interested in the development of new operas and ballets and has worked with Lila York on many projects since 1995. For more information, visit [designcurve.com](http://designcurve.com)

Ballet Arizona's production of *ALICE (In Wonderland)* is sponsored in part by: **SRP**



**Welcome to *ALICE (In Wonderland)* performed by Ballet Arizona!**

SRP is proud to sponsor this special presentation and to continue our strong commitment to supporting the arts and arts education in Arizona. Just as the power and water we deliver are essential resources, we believe that a vibrant and diverse arts community is essential to our culture and our quality of life.

Local community members founded SRP 120 years ago to help the Valley grow and thrive. From the beginning, a critical part of our mission has been to support wonderful

organizations like Ballet Arizona that offer us the incredible opportunity to come together and experience the magic of music and dance.

*On behalf of the more than 5,000 team members of SRP, thank you for supporting Ballet Arizona and the arts in Arizona.*

***Enjoy the show!***

Jim Pratt, GM & CEO, SRP



Choreography: Septime Webre  
Dancers: Artists of Hong Kong Ballet  
Courtesy of Hong Kong Ballet

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## Company

**Brooke Bendick**

Columbus, Ohio | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2022

Training: The School of Ballet Arizona, Balletmet, Houston Ballet, City Ballet of San Diego

**Demitra Bereveskos**

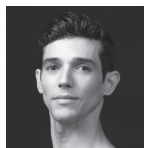
Indianapolis, Indiana | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2019

Training: Valentina Kozlava Dance Conservatory of New York, Canada's National Ballet School, Royal Ballet School, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School, The School of Ballet Arizona

**Lindsay Camden**

Houston, Texas | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2023

Training: American Academy of Dance, Vitacca Vocational School for Dance, Ballet Arizona Studio Company

**Serafin Castro**

Villa Clara, Cuba | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2018

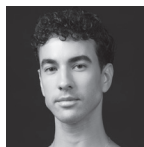
Training: Cuban National Ballet School

Other Companies: National Ballet of Cuba, Ballet of Monterrey

**Alli Chester**

Phoenix, Arizona | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2021

Training: Houston Ballet Academy Professional Program, The School of Ballet Arizona

**Luis Corrales**

Havana, Cuba | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2019

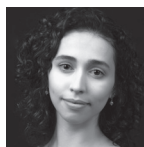
Training: Cuban National Ballet School

Other Companies: Ballet San Antonio, Ecuador National Ballet, Ballet Laura Alonso

**Sarah Diniz**

Maracay, Venezuela | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2020

Training: The School of Ballet Arizona, Orlando Ballet School, Ballet Etudes, The Joffrey Ballet Academy, Pacific Northwest Ballet School, The Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School

**Leticia Endler**

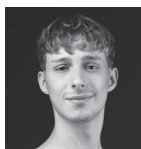
Anápolis, Brazil | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2022

Training: Ballet Zulma Emrich, Cia Paulista de Dança, The School of Ballet Arizona Studio Company

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*Company* continued**Rachel Gehr**

Westfield, Indiana | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2020  
Training: Indiana University Jacobs School of Music,  
Central Indiana Academy of Dance

**Marco Giuriato**

Budapest, Hungary | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2023  
Training: Hungarian Dance University, Vaganova Ballet Academy,  
Miami City Ballet School

**Veronica Hanson**

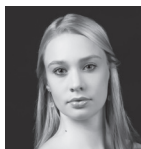
Annandale, New Jersey | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2025  
Training: Hunterdon Hills Ballet, The School of American Ballet

**Genevieve Heron**

Oxfordshire, England | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2024  
Training: Royal Ballet School, Elmhurst School for Dance.  
Other Companies: New English Ballet Theatre, Northern Ballet, Royal  
Swedish Ballet, English National Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet

**Jordan Islas**

Phoenix, Arizona | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2024  
Training: The School of Ballet Arizona, Clarendon Former Ballet Program

**Eastlyn Jensen**

Ridgefield, Connecticut | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2019  
Training: The Studio at Ballet Etudes, American Ballet Theatre School,  
The School of American Ballet, Chautauqua Institution, Houston Ballet,  
Ballet West, The School of Ballet Arizona

**Helio Lima**

Rio De Janeiro, Brazil | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2015  
Training: Ballet Petite Dance School of Dance, New Zealand School of Dance  
Other Companies: Theatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro,  
Royal New Zealand Ballet, West Australian Ballet, Boston Ballet

**Katherine Loxtercamp**

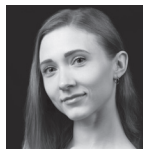
Bemidji, Minnesota | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2016  
Training: Reif Center, Maryland Youth Ballet,  
The School of Ballet Arizona



**Atsunari Matsuyama**

Yamaguchi, Japan | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2020

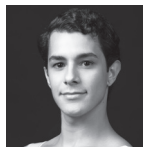
Training: San Francisco Ballet School, The School of Ballet Arizona

**Erin Mesaros**

Eagle, Michigan | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2022

Training: Orlando Ballet School

Other Companies: Orlando Ballet Second Company, San Diego Ballet

**Luis Olivera**

Montevideo, Uruguay | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2022

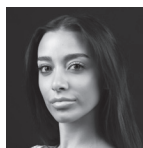
Training: National School of Dance (Sodre), Miami City Ballet School

**Randy Pacheco**

Camagüey, Cuba | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2015

Training: National School of the Arts - Vincentia de la Torre

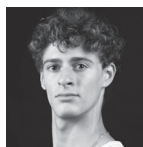
Other Companies: Ballet de Camagüey, Youth Ballet of Jalisco

**Madison Penney**

Phoenix, Arizona | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2025

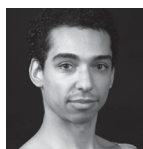
Training: Master Ballet Academy, The Royal Ballet School

Other Companies: Birmingham Royal Ballet, Atlanta Ballet

**Braden Pollack**

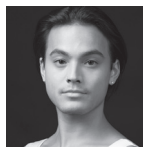
Chatham, New Jersey | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2025

Training: School of American Ballet

**Ethan Price**

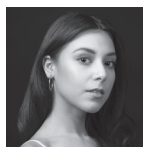
Phoenix, Arizona | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2016

Training: The School of Ballet Arizona

**Trey Puckett**

Spokane, Washington | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2022

Training: Spokane Ballet Studio, Dance Center of Spokane, Moses Lake Dance Academy, Huntsville Ballet Company, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, Miami City Ballet School

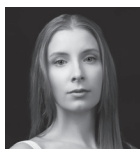
**Natalie Ramirez**

Riverside, California | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2020

Training: Boston Ballet School, The School of Ballet Arizona, Pacific Northwest Ballet, The School of American Ballet

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## Company *continued*

**Alison Remmers**

Sudbury, Massachusetts | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2014  
Training: Walnut Hill School for the Arts, Princeton Ballet,  
Pacific Northwest Ballet, San Francisco Ballet  
Other Companies: Pacific Northwest Ballet

**Erick Rojas**

Mexico City, Mexico | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2023  
Training: DanceFit Impulso al Talento, Miami City Ballet School

**Ricardo Santos**

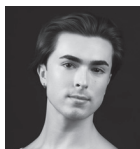
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2016  
Training: Conservatorio Brasileiro de Danca, The Australian Ballet School  
Other Companies: Theatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro, Joffrey Ballet,  
Boston Ballet

**Isabella Seo**

Los Angeles, California | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2021  
Training: Pittsburgh Ballet Theater Graduation Program,  
The Marat Daukayev School of Ballet

**McKenzie Thomas**

Colorado Springs, Colorado | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2025  
Training: Zamuel Ballet School, Master Ballet Academy  
Other Companies: Orlando Ballet, Colorado Ballet

**Greg Trechel**

Albany, New York | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2025  
Training: Northeast Ballet School, Miami City Ballet School,  
The School of Ballet Arizonas Studio Company

**Gabriel Wright**

Dallas, Oregon | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2021  
Training: Pacific Northwest Ballet Professional Division,  
Colburn Dance Academy, American Ballet Academy

**Cheyenne You**

Phoenix, Arizona | Joined Ballet Arizona: 2022  
Training: The School of Ballet Arizona

## Studio Company



The Studio Company performs alongside the professional company and presents its own works independently. Acting as a bridge between school and professional life, the Studio Company provides an opportunity for students of the highest rank to pursue a career in dance. Members are selected by audition only and hail from all over the world. An indispensable and important part of their training is understudying and appearing regularly on stage with Ballet Arizona and in Studio Company productions.

**Photo:** Front Row (from left to right): Emerson Butler, BriAnna Binzak, Nahomi Alafita, Abigail Carpenter, Scarlett Fulton, Laurel Ho Back Row (from left to right): Dakota Blake, Dasha Derkach, Emma Taylor, Juliana Utzinger, Noah Finnigan, Elizabeth Millard, Gabriella Agnew- Huertas, Madeleine Smith

## Ballet Arizona Administrative Staff

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### **Corporate & Foundation Manager**

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### **Customer Experience Representatives**

Alexis Costello

Abraham Newsum

## Director Biographies



### *Daniela Cardim*

*Artistic Director*

Daniela began her career at Ballet of Municipal Theatre of Rio de Janeiro in 1994, becoming a soloist in 1995. She joined the Dutch National Ballet in 1999, performing key roles in ballets such as *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Romeo and Juliet*. She started choreographing as a young dancer and quickly gained recognition with works for the Dutch National Ballet like *Three Movements for Cello & Piano* and *Zahir*. She was selected for the New York Choreographic Institute in 2008 and was named a

“New Name to Watch” by *Dance Europe Magazine* in 2015. She has created works for companies including Birmingham Royal Ballet, West Australian Ballet, New English Ballet Theatre, Dutch National Ballet - main and junior companies, São Paulo Dance Company and Municipal Theatre of Rio de Janeiro. Cardim has also taught, mentored and choreographed at institutions like The Royal Ballet School, Elmhurst Ballet School and English National Ballet. After retiring as a dancer in 2010, she earned a first-class honors degree in arts management from London South Bank University. She has held various leadership roles at the New English Ballet Theatre and was named artistic director of Ballet Arizona in 2024.



### *Jami Kozemczak*

*Executive Director*

Jami Kozemczak was appointed Executive Director for Ballet Arizona in May 2022, after having served as the Director of Development since 2015. Kozemczak works to advance the organization through a people-centered leadership model that focuses on building culture, expanding programs, and increasing revenue generation. During her tenure, the organization has successfully implemented a culture of philanthropy that permeates throughout the organization. She has secured more than \$50 million in contributed

revenue during her time at Ballet Arizona, and increased earned revenue by 53% since her first year as Executive Director.

Kozemczak has 16 years of experience in arts non-profit management which includes fundraising, strategic planning, public relations, communications, donor relations, and marketing. Beginning her career as a marketing professional, she quickly transitioned to fundraising after discovering her true vocation was connecting donors to their passion. Jami holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Arizona State University. Jami's volunteer work centers on mentorship; she served on the AFP Professional Mentoring Program Committee for 7 years and has a passion for helping individuals invest in themselves and their future.



# About Us

**Ballet Arizona**, in its 39th season, is dedicated to preserving and celebrating classical dance while creating new and innovative works. Under the artistic direction of internationally acclaimed choreographer Daniela Cardim—a former dancer with Dutch National Ballet and the Ballet of Municipal Theatre of Rio de Janeiro—Ballet Arizona follows her lead to the future of dance in Arizona. The School of Ballet Arizona promotes access to the art of ballet through dance education, focusing on form and by directing each student to a life-long love of dance. Following this vision, Ballet Arizona connects to more than 25,000 children and families every year through its free and low cost outreach programs.

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*Community Volunteer*

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*Community Volunteer*

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*Community Advocate, Author*

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\*\*In Memoriam

## Artistic Staff



**Maria Simonetti**, *Rehearsal Director*

Ms. Simonetti, a Buenos Aires native, trained at Teatro Colón and danced with La Joven Guardia of Ballet Nacional de Cuba before assisting Laura Alonso as stage director for Cuballet. She taught at several institutions, including the Magda Aunon School of Ballet and Pittsburgh's Point Park College, before becoming ballet mistress at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago in 1995. While assisting choreographer Daniel Ezralow, she contributed to various productions, including *Mandala* and choreography for Pope John Paul II's International Youth Day. She has staged works for the Bratislava Dance Theatre and the National Ballet of Greece. In 1997, she became rehearsal director for Ballet Arizona while still working as a visiting artist, returning to Hubbard Street Dance Chicago each summer. Recently, she collaborated with Ib Andersen on *Romeo & Juliet* for Kansas City Ballet's 50th-anniversary season and served as a guest teacher for Nederlands Dans Theater.



**Lisbet Companioni**, *Ballet Mistress*

A native of Camagüey, Cuba, Lisbet Companioni began her career in ballet as a member of Ballet de Camagüey under the direction of its co-founder, Fernando Alonso. Her repertoire as a dancer includes *Don Quixote*, *Dracula*, *La Bayadère*, *La Fille mal gardée*, *Napoli*, and *The Three Musketeers*. In 2001 Companioni joined Ballet Arizona as a dancer and originated featured roles in Ib Andersen's *2B*, *Elevations*, *Mosaik* and *Play*. Her modern repertoire includes soloist roles in Twyla Tharp's *Sinatra Suite*, *The Golden Section* and *Company B*. Her interest in Balanchine ballets grew as she added George Balanchine's *Agon*, *Apollo*, *Allegro Brillante*, *Serenade*, and *Theme and Variations* to her repertory. Companioni has always had a passion for teaching and coaching dancers, and is also a faculty member at The School of Ballet Arizona. Companioni retired from the stage in 2008 to become Ballet Arizona's Ballet Mistress.



**David Kensing**, *Ballet Master*

A Minnesota native and former Principal Dancer with Pennsylvania Ballet, David Kensing performed numerous leading classical, contemporary and modern dance roles by renowned choreographers. Mr. Kensing has toured the US and Europe, independently and as a PA Ballet dancer, and has been featured domestically and internationally in both company produced and independent productions. Mr. Kensing holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Stephens College, and a Master of Fine Arts from The University of Arizona. In addition to his ballet master duties, he is a faculty member at The School of Ballet Arizona.


**Matthew Kasper, Conductor**

Matthew Kasper currently serves as Principal Conductor of Ballet Arizona, and Artistic and General Director of Phoenix Youth Symphony Orchestras. In 2018, during his sixth season with The Phoenix Symphony, he was promoted from Assistant to Resident Conductor. He is a recipient of the 2020 Solti Foundation US Career Assistance Award. He has conducted extensively in the

United States, Europe and Asia, with the Rochester Philharmonic, the Tucson Symphony, Opera National de Lorraine and the Orchestre Symphonique et Lyrique de Nancy, among others. Matthew is a former member of the Chicago Civic Orchestra. He holds degrees in violin performance from the Aaron Copland School of Music and the Chicago College of Performing Arts. Matthew also holds a Masters degree in Orchestral Conducting from the Aaron Copland School of Music.

## Additional Artistic Staff

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**Company Photographers**

Ron Brewer

Ed Flores

Tzu-Chia Huang

Rosalie O'Connor

Angela Sterling

## The School of Ballet Arizona

As Ballet Arizona's official training school, we are committed to nurturing the next generation of dancers. Our School offers comprehensive ballet education in a supportive and inspiring environment for students of all ages and skill levels, from beginner to pre-professional. Our curriculum, which emphasizes classical ballet technique, artistry, and performance opportunities, is guided by experienced faculty who bring professional expertise to the studio. We are dedicated to excellence and individual growth, fostering a love for dance while preparing students for a future in the arts or beyond.

A comprehensive syllabus has been developed to maintain the fundamental aspects of classical ballet technique and offers the highest quality training at every level, in every program, through:

- Internationally-renowned faculty
- Live piano accompaniment for most ballet classes
- A unique connection to Ballet Arizona as Arizona's official Ballet Company
- Access to the finest dance facility in the Southwest

Ballet Arizona's state-of-the-art facility allows generous capacity for The School of Ballet Arizona to offer education and dance training programs effectively. With seven studios and locker rooms, students can focus and expand their training in this stimulating environment.

In addition to dance training, The School of Ballet Arizona offers open classes for students ages 14 & up. This program is a great way to experience dance training, stay in shape, and have fun. Classes available for all levels.



**Scan the QR code  
to learn more.**



School of Ballet Arizona dancers. Photo by Tzu Chia Huang.





## *James Payne*

*School Director*

James Payne began his ballet training in Phoenix, Arizona with Nina Marlow, Michel Fokine's great niece. He performed with Ballet West (1989-1994) and Houston Ballet (1994-2001). With over 35 years experience in ballet, he has excelled in both classical and contemporary roles, including soloist and principal roles in major classics by Balanchine, Forsythe, and Kylian.

After retiring from performing, Payne served as Houston Ballet's company manager, co-founded a student company and school in Texas, and choreographed five full-length and numerous one-act ballets. He has held roles including Philadelphia Ballet's School Director, Houston Ballet Academy faculty, and board member of the American Guild of Musical Artists. Currently, he is a Master Teacher, judge for YAGP, and repetiteur for Trey McIntyre, staging his ballets worldwide.

## *School Faculty and Staff*

### ***School Manager***

Jasmine Nunn

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# SUMMER PROGRAMS



For details visit  
**balletaz.org**



Photos by Rosalie O'Connor and Tzu-Chia Huang.

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## UPPER DIVISION SUMMER INTENSIVE JUNE 8 – JULY 10, 2026

### **Accepting intermediate and advanced students, ages 12-20**

The School of Ballet Arizona's Summer Intensive offers rigorous, pre-professional ballet training designed to help students elevate their technique and artistry. Under the guidance of experienced instructors, dancers immerse themselves in a comprehensive curriculum that includes classical ballet, pointe, contemporary, conditioning, Horton, and partnering while honing their strength, precision, and performance skills. The program challenges students to push their boundaries and prepares them for future professional opportunities.

*Financial aid available.*

*The School of Ballet Arizona is authorized to accept international students who are ages 16+.*

***Audition registration is now open!***

**Don't miss the Phoenix audition  
Sunday, March 1, 2026 at The School of  
Ballet Arizona**

---

## SUMMER BALLET SCHOOL JUNE 8 – 18 / JULY 13 – 24, 2026

### **Accepting students ages 7 – 12**

The Summer Ballet School is for young students to continue their training through rigorous ballet classes and learn other dance styles, such as contemporary and Horton.\*

**Audition registration now available!**

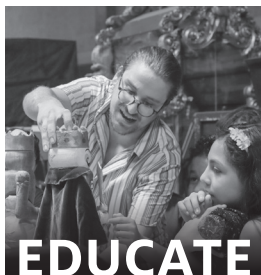
*\*Supplemental class offerings vary.*

*Two or four-week sessions are available.*

## Giving Back

### Community Engagement

For over 30 years, Ballet Arizona has served Arizona communities based on the belief that the magic of a single performance has the ability to change lives. Ballet Arizona offers a wide variety of Community Engagement programs that seek to educate communities about this transformative power of dance. Through our work we strive to empower individuals to engage more deeply with the art form and eliminate the barriers to participation that prevent people from experiencing dance.



**EDUCATE**



**INSPIRE**



**IMPACT**



**25,662  
ARIZONA  
RESIDENTS  
SERVED**

**15 PROGRAMS**

Lifelong Learning  
Programs for Teachers & Schools  
Community Programs  
Behind-the-Scenes Programs

**Schools served in 67 zip codes**



**645  
HOURS**  
spent engaging  
with the community



**\$30,300**  
in scholarship money awarded







Dance for Parkinson's Disease students after class.

## At Ballet Arizona, we offer programs for all members of the community:

### Programs for Teachers and Schools

- Class Act
- Classroom Visits
- DanceAZ
- Driven to Dance
- Performance Hour Field Trips
- Student Matinee Performances

### Creative Aging Programs

- Creative Aging through Dance
- Dance for Parkinson's Disease

### Community Programs

- Adaptive Dance
- Community Angel Nights
- Ballet Under the Stars
- Native American Hoop Dance
- Speaking Engagements and Presentations

### Behind the Scenes Programs

- Performance Chats
- Studio Spotlight

### Community Engagement Teaching Artists:

Eva Bighorse, Debbie Braganza, Sky Duncan, Jonie Henriksson, Angela Patrice, Michelle Reissig, Cecilia Smith

*"Ballet Arizona welcomes children and their parents to be part of the world of ballet in such an easy way. They come to our communities and leave the door open; letting everyone know that they can participate if they want. It's very subtle and very powerful."*

– BAZ Partner



For more information about our Community Engagement programs, visit our website at [balletaz.org/community-engagement](http://balletaz.org/community-engagement) or scan the QR code.

We want to thank our  
Official Community  
Engagement sponsor



THE DIANE & BRUCE HALLE  
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Partnership for Change

# ADAPTIVE & INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS



Photo by Megan Braganza.

## DANCE FOR PARKINSON'S DISEASE

*Find renewed strength, confidence, and hope!*

Ballet Arizona offers free dance classes to help individuals and their caregivers manage the physical and emotional symptoms associated with Parkinson's Disease or movement and balance disorders.

**INSTRUCTOR:** Debbie Braganza

## ADAPTIVE DANCE

*Share the love of dance and foster creativity!*

The Adaptive Dance Program is designed for students ages 5–22 to create a class environment that is sensitive to the needs of students with diverse cognitive, physical and developmental needs while nurturing their self-expression and developing their movement, social, and rhythmic skills. Ages for each level are recommendations, each student will be evaluated for final placement.

**INSTRUCTOR:** Michelle Reissig



Photo by Nikiana Medansky.

For more class information and to register, visit [balletaz.org](http://balletaz.org).

**BALLET**  
ARIZONA

2835 E. Washington St. Phoenix, AZ 85034  
[bazeducation@balletaz.org](mailto:bazeducation@balletaz.org) | 602.343.6508

# OPEN CLASSES FOR ADULTS

***Enjoy the benefits of quality dance  
training in The School of Ballet  
Arizona's remarkable studios***

Open to adults of all ages and teens age 14 and up, this program is a great way to experience dance training, stay in shape and have fun! Classes in ballet, Horton technique and more are offered for true beginners through advanced.



**Named Best Drop-in  
Adult Ballet Class by  
Phoenix New Times**

Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.

For more information visit **balletaz.org**  
or call **602.381.0188**

THE SCHOOL OF  
**BALLET**  
ARIZONA

# Leave a Legacy

The **Legacy for Dance** program recognized those who provide for Ballet Arizona through a gift in their estate plan. A legacy gift may enable you to support Ballet Arizona, secure the financial needs of your loved ones, and provide you with tax benefits. Legacy gifts of all sizes help us meet our current goals and plan further into the future.

**Through our partnership with FreeWill, you have access to a secure, online tool to create or update your will at no cost. In just 20 minutes, you can:**

- Protect your loved ones
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- Gain peace of mind knowing your plans are in place

Visit **[balletaz.org/legacy\\_giving](https://balletaz.org/legacy_giving)** to learn more about FreeWill and our Legacy for Dance program recognizing those who provide for Ballet Arizona through a gift in their estate plan.

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## Have questions?

Contact the Philanthropy Department at **602.343.6510** or **[philanthropy@balletaz.org](mailto:philanthropy@balletaz.org)**.



Scan the code  
below to  
learn more!



# ***Investing in our future***

Ballet Arizona and The School of Ballet Arizona offer a variety of merit and/or need-based scholarships. Beyond furthering education, and in some cases breaking down financial barriers, scholarships are an investment in people, our school, and the advancement of ballet.

## **THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS SCHOLARS**

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This endowed scholarship supports a portion of tuition for four to five students annually.

## **THE DAVID HALLBERG SCHOLARSHIP FOR BOYS**

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This scholarship is awarded to one or more boys ages 13 and up who demonstrate a passion for ballet.

## **THE TED STEPHAN SCHOLARSHIP**

---

Established by a generous bequest from ballet lover and supporter, Ted Stephan, this endowed scholarship is merit-based and awarded each year. His lifelong passion for dance will now live on through future generations.



Photos by Rosalie O'Connor and Tzu-Chia Huang.

To learn more about how you can support our scholarship programs, contact the Philanthropy Department at **602.343.6510** or **[philanthropy@balletaz.org](mailto:philanthropy@balletaz.org)**.

For more information on how to apply for scholarships, please contact The School of Ballet Arizona at **[school@balletaz.org](mailto:school@balletaz.org)**.





# The Ballet Barre

Ballet Barre is a dynamic group of young professionals who support Ballet Arizona through membership, volunteerism and their love of dance. **Membership begins at only \$30 annually!** Members enjoy exclusive benefits, including Ballet Barre Night receptions at Saturday evening Symphony Hall performances, and a behind-the-scenes view of the company.

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Scan the QR code to join today and see our calendar of events!  
For more information email [balletbarre@balletaz.org](mailto:balletbarre@balletaz.org)

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*Ballet Arizona recognizes with deep appreciation contributors to The Next Step campaign, gifts received through January 14, 2026.*

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*We are grateful to these donors who have made Ballet Arizona a component of their estate plans.*

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