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Ballet Arizona Announces Captivating 40th Anniversary Season

Acclaimed Ballet Company Unveils its 2026-2027 Season of Timeless Masterpieces and Contemporary Changemakers

PHOENIX – [Ballet Arizona](#), a distinguished ballet company in the Valley, is celebrating its 40th season with a diverse repertoire comprising both classical and contemporary ballets for Arizona audiences. During the 2026-2027 season, the company will feature productions that explore themes of romance, humanity, energy, athleticism, and innovation. It will also introduce the world premiere of “Stillness,” choreographed by resident choreographer Nayon Iovino, usher in the return of Ib Andersen’s renowned “Romeo and Juliet,” and launch a new choreography lab designed to highlight emerging creative talent.

Ballet Arizona, founded in 1986 through the merger of three companies, has grown into the Southwest’s leading professional ballet organization. Over 40 years, it has pursued its mission to ignite the human spirit through the magic of dance and make ballet accessible to all. The company preserves the beauty of classical ballet while championing new, innovative works, and remains committed to supporting access to the arts within the organization and the community it serves.

Today, under the artistic direction of internationally esteemed dancer and choreographer Daniela Cardim, Ballet Arizona features a company of more than 30 professional, high-caliber dancers who share both the rich traditions and contemporary evolution of the art form with audiences across Arizona.

“We are excited to unveil our 2026-2027 season and to celebrate 40 strong years as a ballet organization,” said Cardim. “This milestone anniversary season is our tribute to the enduring power of dance and the vibrant community that inspires us. We invite everyone to experience the magic, innovation, and passion that defines our company, as we look forward to many more years of artistic excellence.”

The new season will start celebrating the company’s legacy with “**Romeo & Juliet**” Oct. 22-25 at Symphony Hall. Featuring a live performance of Sergei Prokofiev’s lush score by [The Phoenix Symphony](#), Ballet Arizona will bring the star-crossed lover’s story to life in downtown Phoenix. Hailed as acclaimed choreographer Ib Andersen’s greatest work, “Romeo and Juliet” is set to captivate audiences with its sweepingly regal ballroom scenes, rich human emotion, and breathtaking choreography.

A beloved Arizonan tradition, from Dec. 11-27, Ballet Arizona’s production of “**The Nutcracker**” will return to Symphony Hall with its heartwarming performance that will be sure to get audiences rejoicing in the spirit of the holidays. Live music from The Phoenix Symphony will help bring the enchantment and splendor of “The Nutcracker” to life, alongside Artistic Director Emeritus Ib Andersen’s dazzling choreography. Ballet Arizona’s production has been named “among the top three in the country” by The New York Times and has celebrated sold out performances over the last four years.

Ballet Arizona will celebrate Valentine’s weekend with ballet’s ultimate romantic comedy, “**Don Quixote**.” Inspired by Miguel de Cervantes’ beloved novel and choreographed by Marius Petipa with adaptations by Daniela Cardim, this vibrant classic bursts with theatrical flair, mischievous characters, and dazzling dance. From Feb. 11-14, 2027, experience an unforgettable performance that captures the joy, humor, and heart of love itself.

Arizonans can immerse themselves in three short and dynamic works that define ballet today in **“Pulse”** at Orpheum Theatre. From April 1-4, 2027, Ballet Arizona’s spring program highlights *Divertimento No. 15*, choreographed by George Balanchine, *Ghosts*, choreographed by Christopher Wheeldon, and *Fingers in the Air*, choreographed by Juanjo Arqués.

Ballet Arizona will return to the Desert Botanical Garden for its highly anticipated annual performance of **“Desert Lines: An Evening at Desert Botanical Garden.”** This audience favorite features two ballet experiences for a double feature event, including a brand-new work by Ballet Arizona’s Resident Choreographer, Nayon Iovino. From May 12-29, 2027, Ballet Arizona will present the world premiere of **“Stillness,”** by Iovino, and **“Gnawa,”** by world renowned choreographer Nacho Duato.

To conclude its 2026-2027 season, Ballet Arizona will debut its inaugural performance of **“Ballet in the Making”** with two performances on June 12 at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts. This new choreographic initiative invites emerging creators to craft original works through exploration and collaboration. Dancers will take on the role of choreographers and present their staged works-in-progress for the first time at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts.

“We are honored to share Ballet Arizona’s 40th season with our Arizona community,” said Ballet Arizona Executive Director Jami Kozemczak. “From our first season to where we stand today, the company has experienced tremendous growth, shaped by the dedication and passion of so many individuals. We are deeply proud of all we have accomplished together and excited for everything the future holds.”

Ballet Arizona would like to thank its Opening Night Series sponsor F. Francis & Dionne Najafi of Pivotal Foundation, as well as its season sponsors: Arizona Commission on the Arts, APS, The Flinn Foundation, Grand Canyon University, Diane & Bruce Halle Foundation, Carole and Arte Moreno, Phoenix Office of Arts & Culture, Shubert Foundation, SRP, Twiford Foundation, Virginia G. Piper Trust, and Virginia M. Ullman Foundation. Ballet Arizona would also like to thank its production sponsors: Mayo Clinic for its support of *“Romeo and Juliet,”* Joan and Charlie Berry and SRP for their support of *“Don Quixote,”* and Desert Botanical Garden and Goodman’s Interior Structures for their support of *“Desert Lines.”*

BALLET ARIZONA’S 2026-2027 Season

ROMEO & JULIET

Oct. 22-25, 2026

With The Phoenix Symphony at Symphony Hall

Choreography: Ib Andersen

Music: Sergei Prokofiev

Celebrated as Ib Andersen’s greatest work, *Romeo and Juliet* captivates audiences with its exquisite beauty and expression of human emotion. From youthful romance to devastating loss, *Romeo and Juliet* remains the eternal symbol of love in its purest form. In honor of the 40th anniversary season, Ib Andersen’s celebrated interpretation reveals the beauty and brutality of human emotion. Set to Prokofiev’s iconic score and performed live by The Phoenix Symphony, this is a story of passion, conflict, and fate.

THE NUTCRACKER

Dec. 11-27, 2026

With The Phoenix Symphony at Symphony Hall

Choreography: Ib Andersen

Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Ballet Arizona returns to Symphony Hall in grand fashion with this holiday classic. Celebrate the joy and wonder of the season with Ib Andersen's "The Nutcracker" as Tchaikovsky's cherished score is masterfully performed by The Phoenix Symphony. Follow Clara's wintry adventures as she battles mischievous mice and charms the Sugar Plum Fairy. Whether this is your first Nutcracker or your 101st, this heartwarming tradition never fails to enchant and draw smiles from all!

DON QUIXOTE

Feb. 11-14, 2027

With The Phoenix Symphony at Symphony Hall

Choreography after Marius Petipa and Alexander Gorksy. Adaptation and additional choreography by Daniela Cardim.

Music: Ludwig Minkus

Brimming with joy, humor, and Spanish flair, Don Quixote is ballet's ultimate romantic comedy. Inspired by Miguel de Cervantes' beloved novel and brought to the stage through the choreography of Marius Petipa, this lively classic bursts with theatrical energy, cheeky characters, and dazzling dance. Light, playful, and full of heart, Don Quixote is a celebration of love and unforgettable fun.

PULSE: THREE WORKS SHAPING BALLET TODAY

April 1 - 4, 2027

Orpheum Theatre

Immerse yourself in a performance of exceptional contemporary and classical ballet in a mixed program that brings together three dynamic works. Celebrating masterful and inventive choreography, the program comes together like a collection of short stories, each offering its own distinct voice, atmosphere, and artistic world.

Divertimento No. 15

Choreography: George Balanchine

Music: "Divertimento No. 15 in B-flat major, K. 287" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

A grand showcase of classical ballet, Divertimento No. 15 is one of George Balanchine's most radiant and celebratory works. Set to what he considered Mozart's finest divertimento, this dazzling ballet features a regal ensemble, full tutus, and a spectacular display of musicality, precision, and brilliance.

Ghosts

Choreography: Christopher Wheeldon

Music: "Ghosts" by C.F. Kip Winger

Ethereal and emotional, Ghosts evokes a world shaped by memory, atmosphere, and unseen forces. Christopher Wheeldon's choreography weaves intricate partnering and flowing movement into a haunting, hypnotic experience that feels both serene and quietly suspenseful.

Fingers in the Air

Choreography: Juanjo Arqués

Music: Robin Rimbaud - Scanner

What if the performance was never the same twice? Fingers in the air is a dynamic and unexpected contemporary ballet that invites audiences into a world of choice, chance, and movement. Energetic, athletic, and full of surprises, each performance becomes a one-of-a-kind experience.

DESERT LINES: AN EVENING AT DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN

May 12 - May 29, 2027
Desert Botanical Garden

Experience the beauty of ballet beneath the open sky at Desert Botanical Garden. *Desert Lines* transforms the desert landscape into a living stage, where two captivating works unfold at sunset in a celebration of movement, nature, and artistry.

STILLNESS – World Premiere

Choreography: Nayon Iovino
Music: Polar Suite by Christel Veraart

In *Stillness*, Resident Choreographer Nayon Iovino creates a new work that bridges two contrasting worlds: Arctic quiet and desert energy. Set to the cinematic, atmospheric album Polar Suite by composer Christel Veraart, this sculptural and fluid choreography transforms the garden into a space where frozen landscapes meet Southwestern vibrancy, offering a contemplative dialogue between nature, movement, and sound.

Gnawa

Choreography: Nacho Duato
Music: Gift of the Gnawa, “Ma’Bud Allah” by Hassan Hakmoun/Adam Rudolph; Finis Africae, “Carauari” by Juan Alberto Arceche and Javier Paxariño; Nafas, “Window” by Rabih Abou-Khalil, Velez, Kusur and Sarkissian

Choreographed by Nacho Duato, *Gnawa* is a powerful ensemble, inspired by the spiritual traditions and rhythms of North Africa and the Mediterranean. Grounded, fluid, and richly atmospheric, the choreography unfolds with raw energy and organic beauty, evoking both the landscape and the spirit of its people.

BALLET IN THE MAKING

June 12, 2027
Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts

Choreography: Various, *Ballet In the Making* Selections
Music: Various

Ballet Arizona’s new choreographic initiative for emerging voices marks the inaugural program of its kind and is a capstone to the 40th anniversary season. Dancers will step into the role of choreographers, creating original dances through experimentation and collaboration. These staged works-in-progress invite audiences to experience ballet at its most fresh and evolving.

To learn more information about Ballet Arizona and its upcoming season, visit www.balletaz.org.

Ballet Arizona

Since 1986, Ballet Arizona has been 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 soloist with the Ballet of Municipal Theatre of Rio de Janeiro and Dutch National Ballet – Ballet Arizona is excited to follow her lead to the future of dance in Arizona. During its 39th season, the Valley’s professional ballet company will present “The Sleeping Beauty,” “The Nutcracker,” “ALICE (in Wonderland),” “Cacti & Other Works,” and “An Evening at Desert Botanical Garden.” The School of Ballet Arizona, under the new direction of James Payne, 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 26,000 children and families every year through its free and low-cost outreach programs. For more information, visit balletaz.org.

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