

Corporate Spotlight:  
*Wells Fargo*

Donor Spotlight:  
*Mary and David Patino*

Letter From the  
Executive Director:  
*Samantha Turner*

Q&A:  
Artistic Director  
*Ib Andersen*

# TURNING POINTE

## *An Exciting Year Ahead*

How your generosity  
gives Ballet Arizona  
the ability to strive  
for continued  
excellence



Ballet Arizona dancers Nayon Iovino and Jillian Barrell in *Romeo & Juliet*.  
Choreography by Ib Andersen. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.



*I thank you for your continued generosity, support and passion ...*

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2017. On behalf of everyone at Ballet Arizona, I wish you good health and happiness coupled with some spectacular ballet performances. I hope you'll join us this February as we celebrate the return of *Romeo & Juliet*. Accompanied by The Phoenix Symphony, you have a unique opportunity to hear the Prokofiev score performed in its entirety.

In this issue, Executive Director Samantha Turner shares the news about an incredible legacy gift endowed to us by the late Hazel A. S. Hare. This gift is the largest one-time gift ever received in the history of Ballet Arizona. We are deeply honored to be the beneficiaries of such a transformational gift and to be among the few beneficiaries of such a generous woman. Most importantly, I am honored to have had so many wonderful moments in her company and to have been her friend.

Please join me in thanking long-time friends and advocates for the arts, Mary and David Patino, as we spotlight their generosity and passion for what we do at Ballet Arizona. Additionally, we would like to thank our corporate partner, Wells Fargo, a tremendous proponent and supporter of our education and outreach programs.

This issue has such an inspirational article about the lifelong benefits a student receives while being enrolled at The School of Ballet Arizona. The School has grown tremendously in the six years that Carlos Valcárcel has served as school director. Many student alumni have joined Ballet Arizona's professional company. Others have had opportunities to pursue their dreams at prestigious programs – including admission to Paris Opera Ballet School and Royal Ballet School. This speaks to the incredible quality of training we offer at The School of Ballet Arizona.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Turning Pointe*. On behalf of all of us at Ballet Arizona, I thank you for your continued generosity, support and passion for one of the world's greatest art forms – ballet!

Gratefully,

Ib Andersen, Artistic Director

## BEHIND THE SCENES with Ib Andersen

### Q: What is your experience and history with *Romeo & Juliet*?

**A:** I danced Romeo in *Romeo & Juliet* at the Royal Danish Ballet with Mette-Ida Kirk. We were about 20 years old. It was choreographer John Neumeier's premiere and it became such a huge success, they are still doing that version today. This ballet was very crucial for me. It came early in my career and during an important part of it. About four years ago, I saw it for the first time in Denmark. I thought, "Wow! Is this the same ballet we used to do?" Memory is a funny thing, especially when you are very close to something. Your perspective from performing the role changes when watching it from beginning to end. I never actually saw it as an audience member. I knew the ballet because I danced it, but it is such a different experience. I couldn't believe how different my memory was after watching it 30 years later!

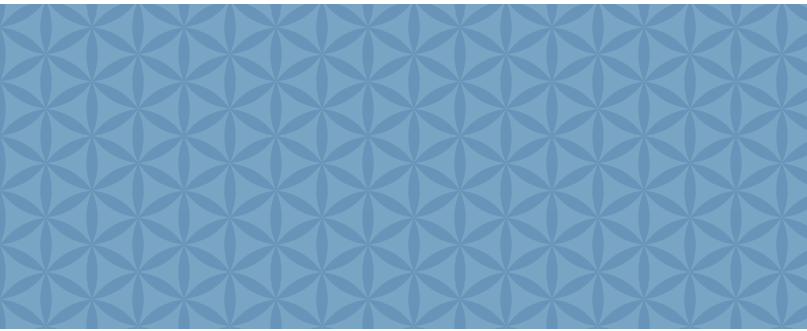
### Q: Did you work with Neumeier directly and did that influence your version of the ballet?

**A:** Yes, I worked with him on the premiere and even went to Hamburg to work with him. At the time, this was the biggest thing he had ever done outside his own company. Working with Neumeier definitely had some influence on me – mostly in the way he tells the story, not choreographically, because we're very different animals.

### Q: Tell us about your version.

**A:** *Romeo & Juliet* is the first full-length ballet we did here after I arrived. We acquired the sets and costumes from Boston Ballet. Since it premiered, it has been staged twice at Kansas City Ballet.

*Romeo & Juliet* has been critical for the success of the company. I consider it one of the best things I've done, choreographically. I'm very proud of this version. I love that each time, I'm able to see my choreography better and better because our dancers keep getting better. This ballet is a very human story, not a fairy tale, so I try to make the dancers look like beings instead of dancers. It's very real.



**Q: How hard is it to take Shakespeare’s words away and achieve the same effect through movement?**

**A:** To me, it’s all about Prokofiev’s music. The score tells the story. It’s very specific and powerful, and you can only do what the music is telling you to do. Each part depicts a certain scene very vividly. You need to follow the score more so than Shakespeare’s text or you will not succeed. This is one of the most extraordinary scores and the music blows you away.

**Q: What is the line-up for *Today’s Masters*?**

**A:** Nayon Iovino and I will each be choreographing a new work, and we will be doing *Paquita*, a classical ballet.

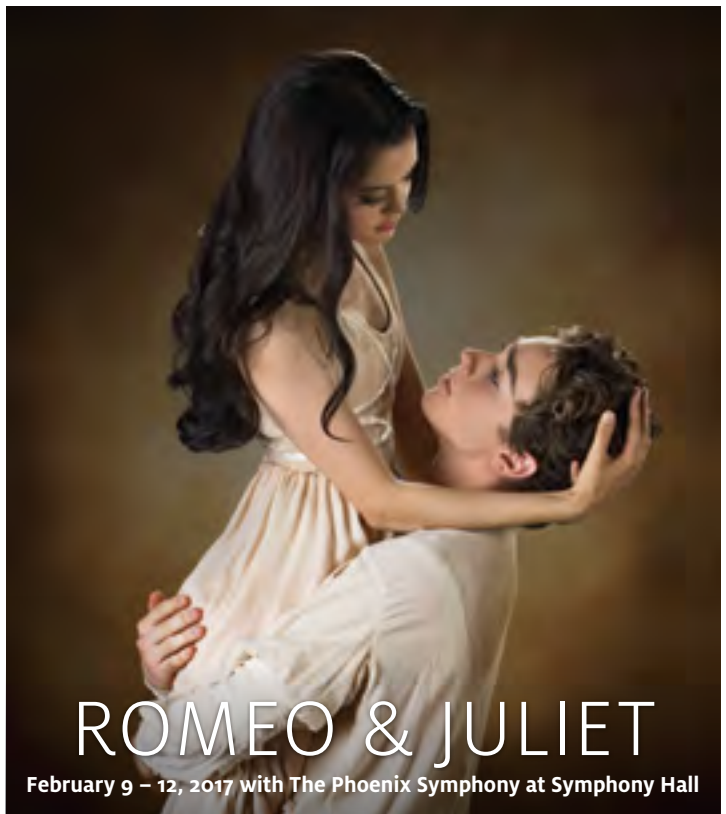
**Q: Should we expect Nayon’s piece to be a classical or contemporary ballet?**

**A:** It will not be a classical or contemporary ballet – it will be a Nayon! He has his own style that’s very different. Nayon’s piece will be choreographed to Stravinsky’s *Jeu de Cartes*, or *Game of Cards*. When you’re a choreographer, you always want to stretch yourself, and not do something that you’ve done before.

**Q: Tell us about your new work.**

**A:** I started choreographing in January. At this point, I can only share with you what’s in my head – and it might change between now and March. With choreography, there’s always the planted seed that’s your original intent, but then what you end up with is completely different.

The music will be another Prokofiev piece, *Scythian Suite*. I’m most excited about incorporating video for the first time. I visited Moab, Utah last summer and took over 400 photographs. Then I went back and decided to take video, rather than stills, of the Colorado River. I’m planning to use the footage as a backdrop projection – a subtle reminder about time. The river is reflective of our time right now. Time keeps flowing no matter what – sometimes it’s violent and sometimes it’s calm. But it keeps changing all the time. I expect this will be a very “earthy” ballet.



Ballet Arizona dancers Mimi Tompkins and Brian Leonard. Photo by Alexander Iziliaev.

**BALLET ARIZONA 2016-2017 SEASON  
UPCOMING DONOR EVENTS**

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**March 22** (Ballet Master’s Circle donors \$5,000+)  
*Dress Rehearsal Viewing at Orpheum Theatre*

**March 23 – 26**  
*Prima Circle Today’s Masters Intermission Receptions at Orpheum Theatre*

We would love to hear from you! Please send any comments or suggestions to Annual Fund Manager Dana Manners at [dmanners@balletaz.org](mailto:dmanners@balletaz.org) or call 602.343.6510.  
*All Tendu+ Donors (\$125+) receive Turning Pointe Donor Impact Report mailed three times annually to their home.*



### Donor Spotlight

Mary & David Patino

You are such longstanding supporters of the arts in Arizona. What inspired such generosity specifically to Ballet Arizona?

Ballet Arizona provides a special joy with their high-quality expression of art.

#### Why do you continue to give?

We enjoy the complexity of the performances and how they demonstrate emotions and thoughts in elegant movement. Young choreographers need to be encouraged to keep creating.

#### What ballets inspire you the most?

We enjoy all the ballets, but especially the *Today's Masters* program and those by George Balanchine.

#### What are you looking forward to this season?

*Today's Masters* is always a surprise.

#### What is your favorite memory at Ballet Arizona?

We enjoy getting to know the dancers and understanding their passion and discipline to create moving art so precisely. Also, Naylor Lovino's choreography to Pink Floyd was wonderful.

#### Why is it important to donate to the arts?

The arts bring beauty and soul to a community.

#### Any other comments you'd like to contribute?

Ballet Arizona provides vignettes that help enhance and deepen our understanding of the emotions and physicality of this art form. We never tire of learning more.

Over the years, Ballet Arizona's Volunteer Corps has been invaluable to our organization. Each season, volunteers help support more than 60 performances, multiple special events and administrative needs. The time and talents of our wonderful volunteers make our work possible.

Undeniably, our volunteers have a huge impact on our organization. From long-time ballet fans and parents from The School of Ballet Arizona, to corporations such as JPMorgan Chase, American Express, and Bank of America, the help of dedicated individual and corporate volunteers are truly a vital part of each and everything we do at Ballet Arizona.

Last season, 289 volunteers from across the Valley donated more than 3,600 hours of time. These hours represent a group of tremendous people, who year after year support our gift shop and box office at performances, help at the front-desk in our office every single week, hand out programs to the thousands of patrons who attend our Ballet Under the Stars performances, and so much more!

*"My love and passion for the art of ballet exceeds words. Volunteering for Ballet Arizona helps me satisfy that passion."*

– Ed Coyoli

Offering fun and fulfilling opportunities, don't miss your chance to get a behind-the-scenes look at Ballet Arizona by joining our Volunteer Corps. Not only will you connect with new people but you will become a valued part of Ballet Arizona's family. For more information about volunteering with Ballet Arizona, please contact Elyse Salisz at [volunteer@balletaz.org](mailto:volunteer@balletaz.org).



### Corporate Spotlight

Wells Fargo

**WELLS  
FARGO**

Wells Fargo is proud to be part of the unique fabric of Arizona that makes our great state

so special. We've been helping to support the communities we serve since we first opened our doors in this great state in 1877. And we are proud to support Ballet Arizona, an organization that brings the world of art and culture to the lives of so many.

Wells Fargo has a long-standing tradition of helping to support the communities in which we do business throughout Arizona and here in the Valley. It's part of who we are as a company and it's a commitment we are very proud of and one which remains a key focus for our company. In 2015, our Arizona team members volunteered 110,344 hours to serve

their communities and we invested more than \$8 million in Arizona schools and nonprofits, including more than \$3.7 million personally contributed by our team members during our annual Community Support Campaign.

Wells Fargo measures the success of our business by the success of communities in which we do business, because we believe we must do our part to invest in our community and help build a better future for all. Our ongoing support for the arts contributes to our community's vitality. We look forward to continuing to invest in the arts to ensure that Arizona continues to be a great place to live.



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Samantha Turner**

## The power of one – the power to transform

**W**hat I have learned in my six-month tenure as Executive Director is that it only takes one person to inspire us all. Any gift of any size can be truly transformational. One Angel Night gift of \$30, one brand new corps de ballet donor, and one extraordinary woman who single-handedly changed the organization with her everlasting legacy. Just one – that powerful one.

Take our \$30 Angel Night donor. She funded a ticket for a child to attend a Ballet Arizona performance. This season, one of those tickets was given to a young girl who is slowly losing her vision to an incurable genetic disease. *The Nutcracker* was on her “sight” seeing bucket list – just one of the experiences she wanted to witness before her eyes robbed her of the opportunity. The night she attended the performance, the young girl was filled with joy and wonder as she intently watched the magical dancers, costumes and sets appear before her. That evening provided a lifelong treasure that not only imparted a memory to be cherished, but also bestowed her with perspective to interpret what she encounters later in life when her vision has vanished. A generous gift from just one thoughtful donor. Just one.

With ticket sales covering only about half the cost of presenting a production and operating the organization, financial gifts are crucial – to pay dancers and staff, keep the lights on, and reach out to our community. Gifts of time and expertise are also invaluable to Ballet Arizona – especially as we strive to balance artistic excellence and fiscal responsibility.

Last month, I was incredibly moved by a patron who reached out offering his help to restore live music to future performances of *The Nutcracker*. While he was very disappointed that live music could not be included in this year's

production – and didn't hold back in telling us so – he understood that the decision was a heartbreaking financial reality. In addition to sending a substantial online donation, he offered his time and expertise to help secure additional funding. That this patron, like so many others, would share his personal and professional time was incredibly uplifting to us all, and is critically important to our fundraising efforts. We now have just one new ambassador advocating for the ballet. Just one.

These are the types of gifts that are within reach for most of us, and you should never underestimate how important your donation – and you – are to Ballet Arizona. We thank you for your gifts – large and small – that support the organization in ways larger than you imagine.

There are, however, once-in-a-lifetime gifts that leave us humbled and in awe, without words to express our gratitude. Ballet Arizona has just received such a gift – the legacy of Hazel A. S. Hare, a longtime supporter and

friend who passed away in early 2016. Thanks to Ms. Hare, Ballet Arizona now has an endowment of more than \$3.5 million that will provide funding year after year to help sustain the organization into the future. We were honored to know her, and are humbled to be among the beneficiaries of her estate. We will never forget her. She was a force – tenacious, loving, generous, and our angel. Hazel was just one who transformed the ballet overnight. Just one.

It is so deeply moving to witness the transformational power of your gifts. On behalf of everyone who benefits from your generosity, please accept our thanks. You are not only supporting great art and artists, but helping to change lives in our community. From \$30 to \$3,500,000, each one of you makes the biggest difference to all of us.

Gratefully,

*Samantha Turner*  
Samantha Turner, Executive Director



Ballet Arizona dancers Myles Lavallee and Arianni Martin in *Resonance*. Choreography by Naylor Iovino. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.

# BEYOND BALLET

## *The School of Ballet Arizona*

Ballet is a passion first, then a discipline. And because of this discipline, ballet teaches you as much about life skills as dance steps. At one point, you emotionally change. You physically change. And you continue to change in ways that make you connect with your body and learn how to use your energy correctly.

But what does it truly mean to be a student at The School of Ballet Arizona? It goes so far beyond learning to dance. It's about etiquette. It demands respect. It involves communication and storytelling. It's magic. And it all takes place in the studio. These are lessons we should all learn, however they are a crucial part of a dancer's training.

At a young age, our students begin to learn not only the basics of ballet, but they learn class etiquette. They are introduced to the value of hard work and the rules to follow in order to accomplish it. Students are taught about respect. It must be given in order for it to be received. They learn how to show respect to their peers around them, respect for their teachers and respect for the pianist.

Students also learn that their concept of perfection doesn't exist. However, our teachers exemplify the value of always striving for perfection and accomplishing as much as you can. Most of all, students are taught that ballet is an art. And as artists, there is a way to communicate to the audience, a way of telling a story. The audience needs to understand from the students exactly what they are trying to share.

As a professional school attached to a company, The School of Ballet Arizona also teaches the art of dancing with live music accompaniment. Students learn to listen. They learn to feel and breathe like the pianist. For a student to experience moving at the rhythm or tempo that a musician dictates is incredible. To have a student experience not only dance, but live music daily, is a wonderful gift.

When a student completes all the school levels, they accomplish something that they will take with them for the rest of their life. No matter where they go, whether they become professional dancers or not, they will take all the life lessons learned in the studio with them and continue to work hard and strive for perfection, because that is how they were trained since they were little.



Carlo Valcárcel, School Director at The School of Ballet Arizona



Photo by Brienne Bland

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS *at Ballet Arizona*

**On January 13, Ballet Arizona honored rehearsal director, Maria Simonetti, on her 20th Anniversary!**

For two decades, Maria has helped develop Ballet Arizona into the desert jewel we are today. Whether managing company dancers, planning rehearsals or creating magic alongside Ib Andersen, Maria is at the heart

of everything we are and everything we strive to become. Below is a glimpse into her world, her many accomplishments and passion for ballet.

### **Tell us a bit about yourself?**

I grew up in Buenos Aires, Argentina and trained as a dancer at Teatro Colón. I've been here a long time, but I also lived in Cuba for three years. I danced with La Joven Guardia of Ballet Nacional de Cuba. Dance has really allowed me to travel all around the world as a guest choreographer, teacher

and stager. I was a Ballet Mistress at Hubbard Street in Chicago when Michael Utoff, who was the Artistic Director at the time, brought me here to Ballet Arizona in 1997.

My parents always took me to see plays in the theater and I loved it. No one else in my family is in the arts but we all love music. I grew up listening to great music and I think that's what made me like the arts at first. After that, I decided I wanted to take ballet classes.

### **What ballet or project has been your favorite?**

I really love *Romeo & Juliet*; it holds a special place in my heart. First of all, I love the music. I believe that after choreographing *The Nutcracker*, it was the first full-length ballet Ib choreographed at Ballet Arizona. At first it was very challenging to pull off, but it turned out great. We also got to stage it for other companies and you could see that it's a good ballet because it worked for other companies as well.



Photo by Rosalie O'Connor

# COMPANY CONNECTION *Meet dancers Eric and Kenna*



## **Eric Hipolito Jr.**

Hometown: Seattle, Washington  
Joined Ballet Arizona: 2015

### **What do you enjoy most about dancing?**

It makes me happy. I love going into the studio and learning new choreography. I love the camaraderie within the company. I love being on stage and living through the music. Ballet is such a visual art. I enjoy being a part of a living, breathing form

of art. Whether I'm on stage for a few minutes or an entire evening, it's transformative to be able to connect with the audience and emote and communicate with people without speaking. It's very humanistic and something everyone can relate to. It's inspiring.

### **Do you have a favorite ballet?**

One of my favorite ballets is *Petite Mort* by Jiri Kylian. It's set to Mozart and is so beautiful. All the music and movements match so well. It feels so natural and just makes sense.

Another great one is *Midsummer Night's Dream*. I played the role of Puck and it was a lot of fun. I really related to that character. He's a trickster and a jokester, and I felt like I didn't have to act. I just got to be myself. That's the best – when you get to embody a character and take the reins.

### **As a dancer and an artist, what is your greatest challenge?**

My greatest challenge and greatest strength are sort of connected. I have always been a smart dancer and have always been able to pick up choreography really quick. But sometimes I overthink things or I jump the gun when I know what's coming up next. One of my greatest challenges is to relax and live within the music and the moment.



## **Kenna Draxton**

Hometown: Rapid City, South Dakota  
Joined Ballet Arizona: 2003

### **When did you begin dancing?**

I started dancing because my mom owned a dance studio. It was inevitable that I would dance, at least when I was young. I started taking classes whenever I could and I never stopped.

I keep dancing because I love it. It's so cliché, but you do something because you love it. I like that it keeps me in shape. Even when I'm sick, it sometimes just feels good to come in, take barre and sweat out the toxins. It's almost like a form of meditation when I'm listening to the music and doing familiar movements. I definitely get into my zone.

### **What is your greatest inspiration?**

If I'm having a hard day getting inspired, or I'm nervous, I think about my kids. I think about dancing for them and that they're sitting in the audience. I know they get excited when they see me on stage and that helps. They are my biggest inspiration.

### **What is your favorite ballet to perform?**

I love *Swan Lake*. I love the music and I love being with all the girls. There's something about dancing in the corps de ballet. Everyone feels important. Not that you don't in other ballets, but *Swan Lake* is special.

I also love the drama and dramatic roles. With *Romeo & Juliet* coming, I'll get to dance Lady Capulet again. The music is amazing and with the live orchestra, it just steals your heart.

### **What are your hobbies outside of ballet?**

Something that has always interested me is learning languages. If I had more time I'd take lessons and learn a new language. I speak three languages fluently: Spanish, English and Italian. I have a fairly good understanding of French and I love Portuguese because I love Brazilian music, but I can't speak it other than singing in the shower (haha). But something that I really love and do frequently is learn about wine! I go to wine tastings and classes all the time.

### **What is your favorite part about your job?**

My favorite thing about my job is when something gets created and you finish it. In the beginning when you start from scratch, everything looks terrible. And then suddenly when you come to the stage and see the end result and how it all comes together is one of the greatest joys.

### **Your title is Rehearsal Director. What does that mean?**

It means that I teach company ballet class several days a week, I make the daily rehearsal schedule, plus run several of those rehearsals. Months before the show, we often put the steps together in each rehearsal, so we start teaching the dancers at zero, and by the time we get to the theater, they are at 100. It's like building a house; we start from the first structure and then keep adding layers and put on the finishing touches at the end to make it look good. It's the same concept, but with steps.



### **What is the most challenging thing about your job?**

I don't think there is ever one specific thing that is challenging, and of course challenges change with time and with whatever is in front of you. For example, if we're doing too many big ballets at once, we don't have enough dancers to run a full rehearsal because they're being used in other rehearsals all day. Last year we had a very big *All Balanchine* program and then went into *Round*, so it was hard to develop a schedule that could give people enough rehearsal time and not feel stressed out.

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BALLET ARIZONA DONOR IMPACT REPORT

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Ballet Arizona dancers Jillian Barrell  
and Eric White in *Resonance*.  
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**BALLET**  
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IB ANDERSEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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