

Corporate Spotlight:  
*American Airlines*

Donor Spotlight:  
*Rita Bricker*

Letter From the  
Executive Director:  
*Samantha Turner*

Q&A:  
Artistic Director  
*Ib Andersen*

# TURNING POINTE

*Continuing  
to thrive*  
thanks to your gifts



Ballet Arizona dancers in *Threads*. Choreography by Nayon Iovino. Photo by Alexander Iziliaev.



**We are grateful to you, our donors,  
whose support makes it possible for  
us to share the beauty of ballet.**

Welcome to Ballet Arizona's 2018-2019 season! We are kicking off the year with our mixed repertoire program *New Moves* at Orpheum Theatre, where we are thrilled to bring world-renowned and Tony Award-winning choreographer Justin Peck's work *In Creases* to Arizona audiences for the first time. My fan-favorite ballet *Rio* will also make a return to the stage, set to an incredible score by Philip Glass that fills you with the energy of Brazil. In February, folklore meets a futuristic world, with my brand new production of *The Firebird*, with costumes designed by the incredible Fabio Toblini. Our *All Balanchine* program will feature George Balanchine's iconic work *Emeralds*, which marks another Arizona premiere this year. And lastly, our season will have its grand finale at Desert Botanical Garden with *Eroica*, where our dancer's artistry and athleticism come together with Beethoven's Third Symphony!

In this issue, we take a look at our New Works Initiative. Since it launched in 2015, Ballet Arizona has brought over 15 new works to the Valley from choreographers such as Alejandro Cerrudo, our very own Nayon Iovino, and myself. We are honored by the support of visionary donors like you who provide the opportunity for the art form to evolve.

Executive Director, Samantha Turner, discusses Ballet Arizona's entrepreneurial approach to not only surviving but thriving as a performing arts organization in our community. This mindset extends to every part of our company, including our highlighted new Education & Community Engagement program, *danceAZ*. This fall, we will be partnering with six under-served schools across the Valley, and establishing mini-residency programs. Over the course of 12 classes, 3rd-5th grade students are going to be introduced to ballet and work with our professional and studio company dancers.

Lastly, thank you to everyone who joined us at *Ballet Under the Stars* earlier this month. For more than 20 years, our company has brought ballet performances to people across the Valley for free. This is no small feat, and we are grateful to you, our donors, whose support makes it possible for us to share the beauty of ballet with our Arizona family. I hope you will enjoy this issue of *Turning Pointe!*

Gratefully,

Ib Andersen, Artistic Director

## BEHIND THE SCENES with Ib Andersen

### Q: What can we expect to see with *New Moves*?

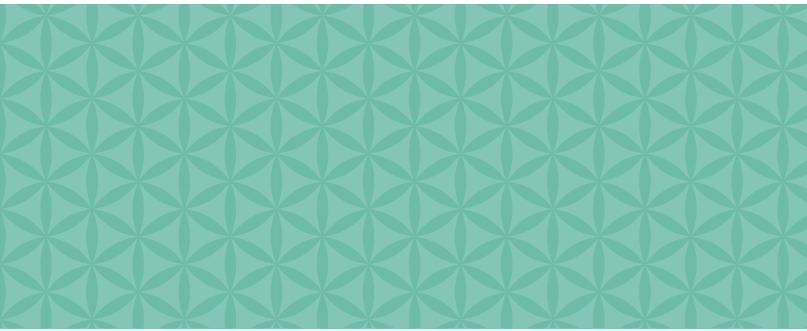
**A:** This season we open with our contemporary repertoire ballets in September instead of March. I think it is going to be a well-rounded program. We are premiering Justin Peck's *In Creases* to Arizona audiences, featuring a new work by Nayon Iovino, and I am bringing *Rio* back to the stage.

This time, *Rio* will stand much stronger. You have to remember that when we performed it in 2017, I had just finished choreographing it right up until we premiered it on stage. Originally, I had intended to do a ballet set to a Prokofiev piece of music and it was just too heavy for me to do at that time. So I changed my mind at the last minute and was searching for a piece of music by Philip Glass, while I was working in New York City. I had actually never heard this music before and from the very first beat it was apparent this was what I wanted to do. When he was honored at Carnegie Hall this was the piece of music he chose for his concert – *Days and Nights in Rocinha*. The ballet is about Samba and the favelas of Brazil – or how I imagine them to be anyway. I have actually never been to Brazil. The music is very hypnotic, it starts quietly, there is a lot of repetition and then just builds in intensity. We are enhancing the women's costumes and now, having more time, the piece will be much more polished so I am looking forward to it.

I have always wanted to feature a ballet by Justin Peck. And quite honestly, it happened because we had a donor step in to fund the Ballet Arizona premiere. He wanted to see a piece by Justin Peck here and helped us make that happen. He has done so much for the company, commissioning at least three different ballets for us – first Alejandro Cerrudo, then a new work by Nayon, and now Justin Peck. We are very fortunate and grateful to have his support in keeping new works alive for Ballet Arizona. We wouldn't have been able to do it without his help.

Nayon's new piece *Inherent* will be the 5th piece he has choreographed for us. He was recently accepted into the New York Choreographic Institute at New York City Ballet for the Spring 2019 which is a tremendous honor and highly competitive. The Institute was created to support talent and generate new work. He will be paired with a composer from Julliard commissioning a new ballet to new music from scratch which is going to be a great challenge for him to achieve in just two weeks. But I am excited for him to have this wonderful opportunity.





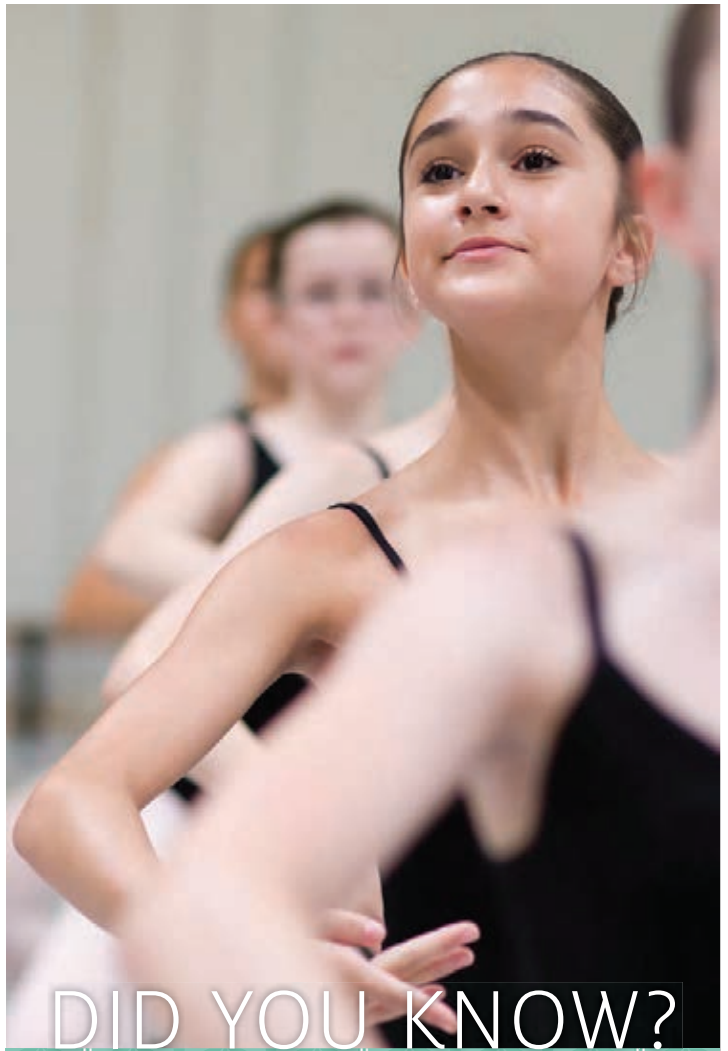
I think he has talent and it is so important for him to keep choreographing. The only way you can do that is if you have the studios, the dancers, and the time to create – and so we are making that investment in him. Even if you have talent it is not that easy to develop if you are not given the chances to keep practicing it. You need to keep doing – and that is what we are giving him. The investment is paying off, I think he is getting better with each piece. He is still very young! As a choreographer you are the only one that can challenge yourself to try and do something new and different each time. Some people stick to a formula – others can branch out and that’s what we have with Nayon.

**Q: From contemporary to classical, what excites you most about *The Sleeping Beauty*?**

**A:** I think *The Sleeping Beauty* is very pure – from the music to the choreography, to the story and all that it stands for. It is the textbook for what classical ballet should be. It is a very naked ballet in the sense that you cannot hide behind anything. You need to hit the high C and it needs to be very clear with no bravado. My favorite part is most of the first act actually. The prologue, the fairy’s variations, but especially Rose Adagio. Rose Adagio is very simple but it’s just so amazing. It’s as good as it gets. That first act is probably the most demanding for any female dancer. I feel like it remains relevant because as a company you measure yourself against this ballet by how well you can perform it. You will definitely know where you stand.

**Q: Any sneak peeks from *The Firebird* that you could share?**

**A:** Fabio Toblini, our costume designer, was in town last week, and we defined many things while he was here. I have also begun choreographing. I think in 4 days I have already done 11 minutes (which is a lot). I am making *The Firebird* into an alien. I’m changing who the characters are. It’s sort of like Star Trek meets Lord of the Rings, maybe a little Game of Thrones, maybe a little bit of Space Odyssey 2001 (ha!). It is still undefined, but I will say they will land in a spacecraft and so you just need to use your imagination. I am actually a little scared right now as this is definitely a challenge for me. It is going to take a long time to come together. We shall see...



The School of Ballet Arizona dancers. Photo by Brienne Bland.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Fun Facts about *The School of Ballet Arizona (SBAZ)***

- There are currently 5 SBAZ graduates dancing with our professional company. Other graduates have gone on to dance professionally with companies such as American Ballet Theatre, Royal Ballet of Flanders and Boston Ballet.
- Starting at our Children’s Division through Studio Company, as well as our Open classes, SBAZ offers a range of dance classes for students of all ages!
- There is live piano accompaniment for all ballet classes.
- For the 2018-2019 school year, SBAZ provided more than \$63,000 in financial aid and merit-based scholarships to students and their families. These awards make it possible for students to train at a professional level. They also provide support for especially gifted students who exhibit dedication to growing in the art form.

**We would love to hear from you!** Please send any comments or suggestions to Annual Fund Coordinator Elyse Salisz at [esalisz@balletaz.org](mailto:esalisz@balletaz.org) or call 602.343.6510.



## Donor Spotlight

**Rita Bricker**

**You are such a longstanding supporter of the arts in Arizona. What inspired such generosity to the arts and specifically Ballet Arizona?**

The arts provide excitement, beauty and inspiration in our lives. Ballet is the crème de la crème of the arts, in my mind. I have loved ballet all my life but my

circumstances never allowed me to study dance. Ballet Arizona brings the joy of dance to me vicariously, so I am compelled to repay the gift.

### Why did you become a monthly sustaining donor?

A monthly contribution is a convenient and painless means of providing ongoing support to an organization that I have long admired.

### What Ballets or contemporary works have inspired you the most?

I absolutely adored *Western Symphony* from *All Balanchine* in 2017. It was so much fun and the costumes were delightful. However, this season's *Eroica* at the Desert Botanical Garden was truly uplifting and awe-inspiring.

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

I am most excited about *The Firebird* this season.

### Which ballet did you enjoy most last season and why?

I am really drawn to the *All Balanchine* performances. Last season my favorite was *La Sonnambula*. I loved the simplicity and purity of it.

### Any other comments you might like to contribute...

I am very proud of Ballet Arizona. We are most fortunate to have the Company in our community.



## danceAZ An Initiative to Strengthen Arizona Children's Arts Education

# BALLET ARIZONA'S SCHOOL RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Dance has the power to connect people to themselves, to others and to the larger world community. It can provide people with avenues to explore creativity, foster imagination and improve discipline. It can offer experiences that connect people to themselves and others through physical, intellectual, emotional and civic applications. It inherently provides opportunities to develop 21st Century skills like collaboration, teamwork, critical thinking and problem-solving. It's one of the few art forms that can nourish the mind, body and spirit altogether. So, why do only 5% of Arizona schools have dance as a course of study?

That's the very question Education & Community Engagement seeks to address with our newest community engagement program, *danceAZ*. In this inaugural year, we are excited to partner with six under-served schools around the Valley to establish mini-residency programs designed to engage children in grades 3-5. Up to 30 students from each school will have the opportunity to participate in semi-weekly

60-minute classes (for a total of 12 classes) where they will be introduced to the art of ballet in a community-centered and experiential way. Participating students will learn how to work together as a corps of dancers over the course of the residency and will participate alongside our professional company and studio company members in a final free performance for their friends, family and school community.

**Your advocacy and support truly make a difference and we are so grateful to be able to give back to people and communities all over Arizona.**

National studies have shown that children who have arts rich experiences in their K-12 years exhibit higher levels of academic achievement, academic aspiration and civic-mindedness than their peers with less arts involvement. It is our desire to better support this finding,

and our *danceAZ* program is the pilot for what will ideally grow over time to encompass a full semester. In the future, we would like to lengthen the program to a full, 15 week semester, which could be implemented twice a year. For the first seven and a half weeks of the semester, curriculum content would focus on building students' technical movement, vocabulary and collaborative, cooperative corps dance skills. Then, in the second seven and a half weeks of the semester, students would collaboratively choreograph a dance that they would perform in a free community performance at the end of the program. In this second phase, choreographic and creative skills would be prioritized as well as content themes, group creation and objective/subjective peer reviewing skills.

To learn more about this program, please contact Alexandra Papazian, Education & Community Engagement Manager at [apapazian@balletaz.org](mailto:apapazian@balletaz.org).





## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Samantha Turner**

In 2016, The New York Times referred to Ballet Arizona as “one of the most enterprising companies anywhere.” The context of that comment was chief dance critic Alastair Macaulay’s review of *Round*, but that description — inventive, resourceful and adventurous — extends to Ballet Arizona in so many ways. Thanks to your support, there are things happening in the Valley that you will see in few, if any other, places in the country.

Consider *Ballet Under the Stars*, presented earlier this month in four communities. For 21 years, your gifts have provided more than 250,000 people the opportunity to see a free ballet performance under the desert skies at parks across the Valley. Do some googling and you’ll see that there is no other professional ballet company in the country that offers a free performance like *Ballet Under the Stars*, let alone a series of evenings, year after year. More than \$150,000 in support from donors like you, corporations, foundations and the National Endowment for the Arts made it possible to present this program that costs nearly \$400,000 to produce. We are actively seeking expanded support for *Ballet Under the Stars* and we welcome your introductions to people and organizations who can help us make sure we can continue to offer this unprecedented community gift.

While you are googling, look to see how many ballet companies partner with a professional symphony orchestra to provide live music at performances. Our partnership with the Phoenix Symphony is one of the few instances in the country that brings together both the professional ballet and orchestra. Ballet performed to live music, particularly on the level of the Phoenix Symphony, is the art in its greatest form, elevating the experience for both the audience and the dancers. We are deeply grateful to Hazel A. S. Hare, a beloved, long-time supporter whose legacy gift established an endowment of more than \$4 million that helps fund

live music. It is our dream to grow that endowment to \$10 million so that its earnings can support the full cost of investment in live music, which approaches a half million dollars.

Our Artistic Director, Ib Andersen, is the foundation of Ballet Arizona’s enterprising spirit, which he carries into the studio and onto the stage. From the first day the dancers return to prepare for the upcoming season, Ib is in the rehearsal studio — all day, every day — guiding them toward that elusive perfection they seek to share with the audience. Surprisingly, it is rare to have an artistic director make this deep commitment to the dancers, the art and patrons like you who experience and support the ballet. In many cases, artistic leadership will step into the studio just a week or two before the performance to supervise the final adjustments. Ib’s daily caretaking of the art — as a protégé and direct link to George Balanchine, the father of American ballet — brings to the stage performances that compare to the most prestigious companies in the country. Your annual gift supports Ib, the dancers and all the artistic and production staff in this daily work to bring magnificent art to the stage.

There are many other examples I could share. This enterprising approach is critical to a thriving ballet company and performing arts culture in our community. The most important point, however, is that it all happens because of your gifts. Thank you for making all of this possible.

Gratefully,

Samantha Turner, Executive Director

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# NEW WORKS INITIATIVE

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As you read earlier in this issue, in 2016, after the premiere of Artistic Director Ib Andersen's ballet *Round* at Desert Botanical Garden, esteemed New York Times dance critic Alastair Macaulay wrote, "I've visited Ballet Arizona five times now. Its repertory – from August Bournonville's *Napoli* to George Balanchine to among the world's finest *Nutcracker* presentations – this strikes me as one of the most enterprising companies anywhere." These words speak to the heart of our company, and to the purpose of our New Works Initiative.

Ballet is an art form that has spanned centuries, originating in the 15th and 16th century Italian Renaissance courts, and like most art forms has evolved over time. However over the course of history, ballet has built the reputation of being an art for the elites, and very much stuck in the past. Year after year, companies around the world, including Ballet Arizona, continue to perform works created in the 19th century, such as *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Giselle*. So how do companies honor the classical traditions of ballet, while bringing it into the modern era? The answer, new works.

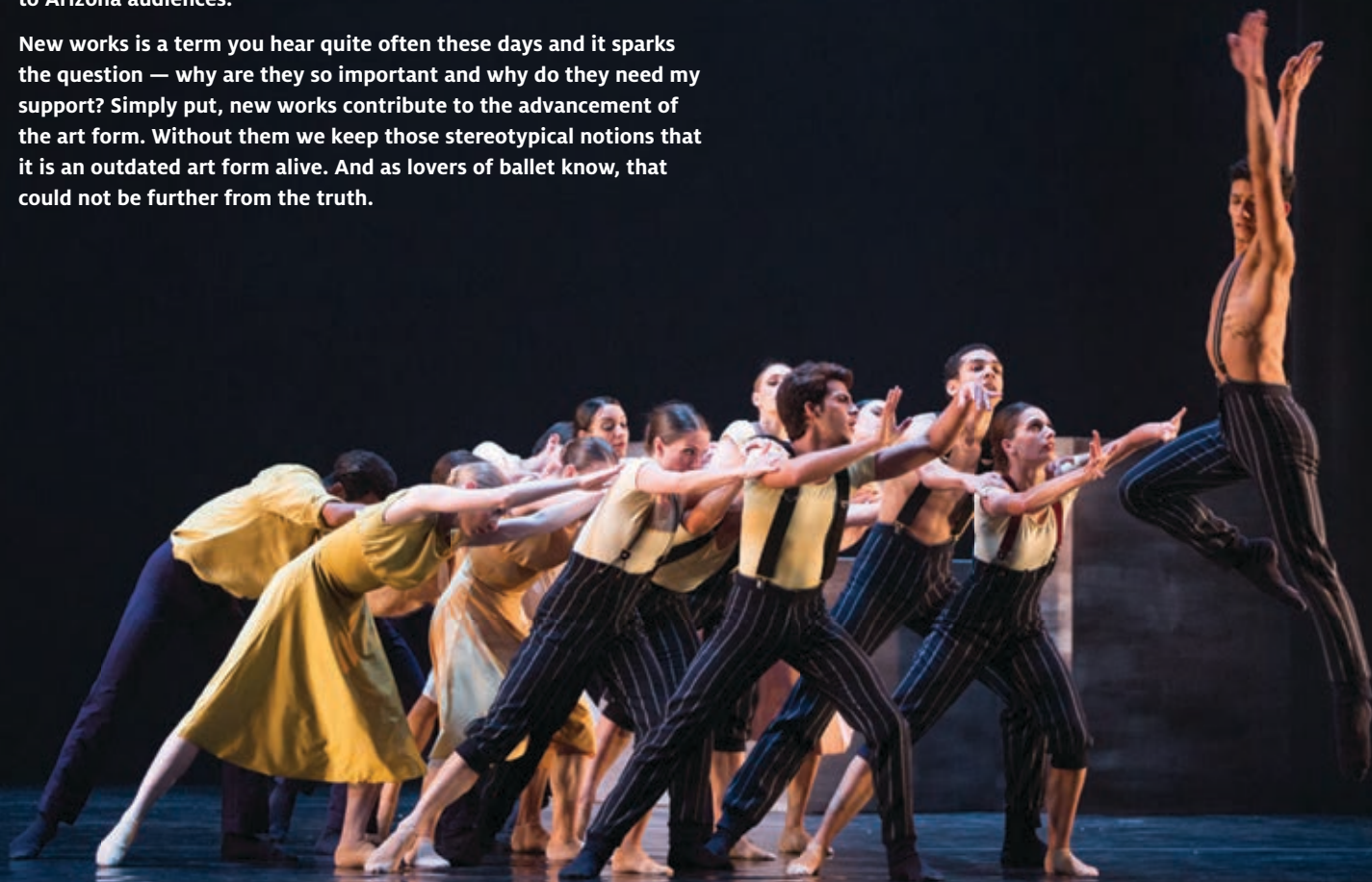
As part of our mission states, "The Company is dedicated to preserving and celebrating classical dance while creating and commissioning new and innovative works." So in 2015, Ballet Arizona launched the New Works Initiative, with the purpose of ensuring our company continue to bring innovative and provocative performances to Arizona audiences.

New works is a term you hear quite often these days and it sparks the question — why are they so important and why do they need my support? Simply put, new works contribute to the advancement of the art form. Without them we keep those stereotypical notions that it is an outdated art form alive. And as lovers of ballet know, that could not be further from the truth.

Since the launch of our New Works Initiative, Ballet Arizona has brought over 15 new works to the Valley. From the first-ever American production of the 1842 classical ballet *Napoli*, to works by world-renowned choreographers like Alejandro Cerrudo of Hubbard Street Dance, and Justin Peck of New York City Ballet, to contemporary ballets by our very own Ib Andersen, like his highly-anticipated premiere of *The Firebird* coming to the Valley in February 2019! These achievements would not be possible without donor support.

When asked what new works mean to the art form, company dancer Nayon Iovino, who has created 5 ballets for the company said, "They are necessary for innovation. Creating something new expands the boundaries of the art form. New works are also a reflection of a society or a person in the present time. It's important to continue pushing the limits of dance and to add those moments to history."

This funding has allowed a creative environment here at Ballet Arizona to flourish, not only providing our dancers with new opportunities to develop as artists, but giving the Arizona community, whether they are long-standing patrons or curious first-timers, a variety of choices when it comes to experiencing ballet. So we say thank you to everyone who has supported the New Works Initiative, we look forward to what the future holds!





## Corporate Spotlight

### American Airlines

On April 15, 1926, Charles Lindbergh flew the first American Airlines flight – carrying U.S. mail from St. Louis, Missouri to Chicago, Illinois. After 8 years of mail routes, the airline began to form into what it is today. Now more than ninety years later, after US Airways flew its last flight, American and US Airways operate as one airline.

As part of forming the new American Airlines, the company launched a locally-driven initiative to bring corporate charitable giving and team member volunteer service together as the cornerstones of its community investment strategy. Through its Regional Councils, American seeks to engage organizations who match its singular mission of supporting nonprofits in three focus areas – education, human services and military/veteran affairs.

The Regional Councils are made up of team members in each of our hub locations. During bi-annual meetings, team members review applications from organizations looking to partner with American and examine how the company's unique resources will support their mission and strengthen the local community.

In short, American looks for opportunities to maximize the positive impact it can make in the Valley of the Sun, where nearly 10,000 American team members live and work. And thanks to strong partners like Ballet Arizona, American is well on its way to accomplishing it.



## COMPANY CONNECTION *Meet dancers Alison and Erick*



### Alison Remmers

Hometown: Sudbury, Massachusetts  
Joined Ballet Arizona: 2014

#### What has been your most memorable moment on stage so far?

Performing Juliet's cousin was one of the most memorable moments for me thus far. Having the chance to take on such a joyful, young character was so fun.

Dancing in the moment and fully living in the story is what I enjoyed most. Along with that, Prokofiev's score is so emotionally moving and performing with The Phoenix Symphony was a gift.

#### Who is your greatest dance inspiration?

Choreography wise, George Balanchine inspires me most. The way his movement plays with the music is incredibly fulfilling to perform. Carla Körbes is a beautiful dancer who has inspired me through her artistry. The way she connects to the entire audience and how she can make them feel is inspiring. I am so fortunate to have seen her perform

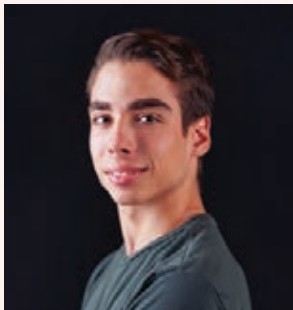
before she retired. I have one memory of watching her rehearse, I was physically moved to tears and thought "if she can do this in a rehearsal I cannot imagine what she's like on stage."

#### What's in your dance bag?

I usually have three pairs of pointe shoes that I rotate throughout the day. Along with that, I have three pairs of toe pads I rotate through to help prevent the formation of blisters and corns. I also carry technique shoes, Thera bands, toe tape, leg warmers, practice skirt, lacrosse ball to roll out and my stitch kit which includes scissors, thread, needles, nail clippers, and cuticle cutters.

#### What do you do outside of dance?

I like to do a lot of different things outside the studios, sewing is one of them. I have my own sewing studio set up in my apartment that I'll create ballet attire such as leotards, warmups, and skirts or I'll get creative and design something like my gala dress I wore last year. Along with sewing, I like to cook and spend time with family and friends; it's good to have a balance in your life.



### Erick Garnica

Hometown: San Diego, California  
Joined Ballet Arizona: 2016

#### What inspired you to become a professional dancer?

I knew I wanted to be a professional dancer since I was young. I have always loved performing and feeling the energy that comes from live art.

#### Who is your greatest dance inspiration?

My dance inspirations would be David Hallberg, Semyon Chudin, Friedemann Vogel and Sergei Polinin, as well as many choreographers such as William Forsythe, Alexander Ekman and Sebastien Bertaud. I just love admiring beauty!

#### Do you have a pre-performance ritual?

My pre-performance ritual isn't always the same but it's always making sure I get my body the most prepared I can for the role or part I am performing. However, coffee is a must before every show as well as listening to whatever music will get me into the right mood.

#### Do you prefer modern or classical dance?

I prefer dancing classical ballet but I enjoy watching contemporary more.

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

This season, I am looking forward to working hard and developing as an artist!

BALLET ARIZONA 2018–2019 SEASON  
UPCOMING DONOR EVENTS

**September 27 – 30** (All Prima Circle Members)  
Intermission Receptions at *New Moves*

**October 12** (All Prima Circle Members)  
*The Sleeping Beauty* Studio Spotlight

**October 18** (\$500 & Up)  
Corps de Ballet Rehearsal Viewing

**October 24** (\$5,000 & Up)  
*The Sleeping Beauty* Dress Rehearsal Viewing

**October 25** (\$2,500 & Up)  
*The Sleeping Beauty* Company Class Viewing on Stage

**October 25 – 28** (All Prima Circle Members)  
Intermission Receptions at *The Sleeping Beauty* (except Sunday evening)

**October 25 – 28** (\$3,500 & Up)  
Backstage Tour at *The Sleeping Beauty*

**November 15 – 18** Dorrance Theater  
*Swan Lake* performed by The School of Ballet Arizona

**November 29** (All Prima Circle Members)  
Prima Circle Rehearsal Viewing & Lunch

**December 13 – 24**  
*The Nutcracker* at Symphony Hall

**December 19** (\$5,000 & Up)  
*The Nutcracker Angel Night* at Symphony Hall

**January 15** (\$2,500 & Up)  
Company Class Viewing

**January 25** (\$500 & Up)  
*Dance with Me* – A Ballet Arizona Gala at Phoenix Art Museum

**February 1** (All Prima Circle Members)  
Prima Circle Evening & *The Firebird* / *La Sylphide* Studio Spotlight Performance

**BALLET**  
ARIZONA

IB ANDERSEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Ballet Arizona dancers in *The Sleeping Beauty*.  
Photo by Alexander Iziliaev.

