

Corporate Spotlight:  
APS

Donor Spotlight:  
Phil Haggerty &  
Edith Goble

Letter From the  
Executive Director:  
Samantha Turner

Q&A:  
Artistic Director  
Ib Andersen

# TURNING POINTE

## *Inspiring Support*

How the gift of  
your time, voice  
and passion helps  
create greatness.



Ballet Arizona dancers Chelsea Teel and Helio Lima in *Square Dance*. Choreography by George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust. Photo by Alexander Iziliaev.



*We are honored by your trust,  
humbled by your support and  
inspired by your passion ...*

Thank you for being such an instrumental part of Ballet Arizona's 2016-2017 season. Together we've traveled the world – from India to Verona to Rio. We are grateful that you shared this season's repertoire with us and hope to see you at *All Balanchine* at Phoenix Symphony Hall. We're also thrilled to conclude our season at Desert Botanical Garden this May with *Topia*.

This season, you have embraced change by our side which helped us stabilize and maintain our status as the premier ballet company in Arizona, and an artistic and creative leader in Phoenix's cultural hub. We are honored by your trust, humbled by your support and inspired by your passion for the art of ballet.

In this issue of *Turning Pointe*, our Executive Director Samantha Turner shares how the power of one person's voice creates a ripple effect of impact and awareness. You never know who you may meet during your daily routine or the action that could be prompted by your voice. Carlos Valcárcel will also be sharing some incredible news that will change The School of Ballet Arizona as we know it and help it grow to its full potential.

We will also shine the light on long-time supporters Phil Haggerty and Edith Goble with their 17 years of generosity and support helping shape Ballet Arizona into the jewel you see today. Additionally, we encourage you to get to know our corporate partner, APS. Over the last 32 years, APS has invested in building stronger communities through Ballet Arizona's outreach and education programs.

You will also have the opportunity to meet one of Ballet Arizona's unsung heroes and artistic treasures, Leonor Texidor. Leonor is our Costume Director and my design partner. She leads the team that brings fabric to life and helps create the magic you see onstage during every production.

I hope you enjoy this season's final issue of *Turning Pointe*. It is truly a tribute to you, your support and everything you've made possible not just this season, but for all seasons in the past and the ones we have yet to experience. Today, I give YOU a standing ovation in acknowledgement, appreciation and fondest regard.

Gratefully,

Ib Andersen, Artistic Director

## BEHIND THE SCENES with Ib Andersen

### Q: What is in store for the *All Balanchine* repertory program this May?

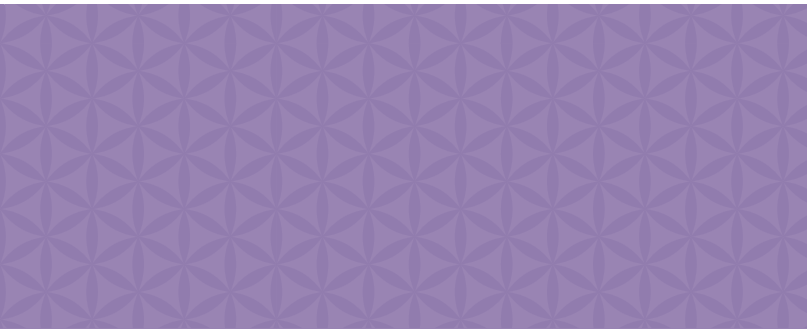
**A:** We are doing *Western Symphony*, *Agon*, and *Square Dance*. *Square Dance* is a premiere for Ballet Arizona. Balanchine blended classical ballet with American folk dance in this piece. The music was composed by Corelli and Vivaldi. Originally, it was almost like a spoof. He used an American square dance caller on stage and the orchestra musicians were on the stage too. Balanchine later took out the caller and he added a male solo. This is a very difficult ballet for the female principal and the female corps because it is a technical tour de force for the women. For the men, it's quite the opposite. The solo is very slow, so the challenge comes from how slow and controlled the movements are for the men.

"Agon" in Greek means "contest." Even though it is not a Ballet Arizona premiere, it's been over 10 years since we've staged it so technically it's new for us and we are having a Balanchine repetiteur, Richard Tanner, stage it. Igor Stravinsky was the composer and this was one of those examples of Balanchine and Stravinsky working side by side. The music was composed for the ballet. They worked together very closely. Balanchine's idea was to make something that had never been done before, in how it was choreographed and how it would come across to the audience. It is one of his strongest ballets. The music is very difficult and it's one of the hardest ballets to do justice to, giving it the right "nervous energy" it requires. Even today there is a very modern edge to it. It is an extraordinary ballet.

Do I have a favorite of the three? *Square Dance* is definitely the lightest. *Agon* is more demanding musically because you actually have to count, especially throughout the opening and the finale. *Western Symphony* is a crowd favorite and a fun finale for Arizona audiences. You feel great energy leaving the theatre after that one! No, I don't have a favorite, I like them all.

### Q: Did you perform any of these ballets?

**A:** Yes, I have danced all three! I performed *Square Dance* many times. I danced it with one of the very best, Merrill Ashley. She was phenomenal – there will never be anyone like her. She had



the fastest legs of any dancer I had ever seen. Then dancing *Agon* ... let's just say the first time I did this ballet, I only had a couple of rehearsals, and really didn't know anything. I honestly don't know how I got through it – I just followed other people while performing. It was really a nightmare. Ha!

**Q: What is the story behind *Topia*?**

**A:** We had all loosely discussed doing something at the Garden and were trying to decide what to do. Originally, it was supposed to have been behind the Wildflower Trail. The location was very nice, but in all practicality, it would have been too hard to do there. Then we found what would eventually become the “event space” near the Garden entrance. There were huge saguaros in the background that I loved, which became part of the scenery.

Then it just screamed to me that we needed a huge stage. It's so big out there in the desert. When I first choreographed it, we were still in the old building and we actually rehearsed outside in the parking lot. Now we have a studio that is only four feet smaller so we can rehearse inside. *Topia* means both landscape painting, and/or landscaping architecture in Latin.

After I decided on the stage, I chose the music, Beethoven's 6th Symphony. I never would have used this music on a normal stage in a theatre because this symphony is one of the pinnacles of music. I only chose it because *Topia* was outside and the Papago Buttes, the sky, and the desert landscape are so grand. It was the only reason that I thought Beethoven might have the slightest bit of competition. If I could communicate with Balanchine right now, he would probably laugh and say 'how dare you - good luck with that one' because of the status of this music. I have so much respect for music – and there are often things that I feel you should not touch because what could you possibly add to it? This one was borderline. But because of the setting, I think it makes sense and works. The music is amazing. The landscape becomes part of it. It's a surreal experience.



Ballet Arizona dancers in *Topia*. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.

# TOPIA

May 23 – June 10, 2017 at Desert Botanical Garden

## BALLET ARIZONA 2016-2017 SEASON UPCOMING DONOR EVENTS

**May 11 – 14** (All Prima Circle Members)  
*All Balanchine Intermission Receptions at Symphony Hall*

**May 18** (Pirouette Members and Above)  
*Topia Rehearsal Viewing at Desert Botanical Garden*

**May 23** (All Prima Circle Members)  
*Opening Night Reception at Desert Botanical Garden*

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

**Phil Haggerty & Edith Goble**

**You have been supporters of Ballet Arizona since 1995. What has inspired your generosity?**

We have been delighted to support Ballet

Arizona since 1995, after our first season of attendance. The enthusiasm and dedication of the dancers, and in fact, the entire organization has inspired us. The continued growth of the Company, artistically and otherwise, has generated our desire to ensure as much as we can, the continued existence of Ballet Arizona. We remember the time when its life was in

doubt, and we joined with a rather small, but still dedicated group of other ballet lovers to make sure we still had our ballet.

**What ballets inspire you the most?**

We have been inspired by many productions, but particularly love *Romeo & Juliet* and *Today's Masters*; especially the dances choreographed by Company dancers. We always look forward to *All Balanchine*, where Ib can show us how he has created one of the great ballet teams in the country.

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

One of our favorite memories is of the first *Topia* at Desert Botanical Garden, with the sunset behind the dancers.

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

Arts are the life of the community. We attend the Phoenix Symphony, Arizona Opera and the Phoenix Chorale as well. None of these would survive without donations, and we are proud to be of some small help.

**Any other comments that you'd like to contribute?**

We also appreciate the constant friendliness of the staff, as well as the special events, from Ballet Under the Stars to the Prima Circle Studio Spotlight events and rehearsal opportunities.

## Corporate Spotlight

**APS**

Arizona Public Service, APS, has served Arizona residents for more than 130 years and is the largest and longest serving electric company in the state. APS generates safe, affordable and reliable electricity for more than 2.7 million retail and residential customers in 11 of Arizona's 15 counties.

Their vision is to create a sustainable energy future for Arizona through the use of innovative smart technologies, renewable energy sources and energy efficiency that serve as the key components in meeting that vision. Sustainability and corporate responsibility are integral to the APS business model and inherent in the company culture.

Investing in people and places that help build strong communities is part of that sustainability plan. Through their philanthropic programs, APS provides financial and in-kind support to hundreds of Arizona non-profits; in 2016 alone, APS donated over \$10M to organizations that enrich our community and contribute to the economic vitality of our state.

Since 1985, APS has supported Ballet Arizona in numerous ways, including program grants, event sponsorships and strategic leadership, with Stefanie Layton, APS Director Revenue Requirements currently serving on our Board of Directors. In recent years, APS has championed our flagship outreach program, Ballet Under the Stars.

Consisting of five free ballet performances, Ballet Under the Stars has been delighting area audiences for 20 years. Engaging residents in venues across metro Phoenix, this popular community outreach program has served more than 200,000 people with free ballet performances since 1997. Serving 13,000 people annually, Ballet Under the Stars is designed to provide more people in underserved communities with easy access to arts programming.

Ballet Arizona is proud to partner with APS in bringing outstanding programs like Ballet Under the Stars to the community.





# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Samantha Turner**

## The power of one – the power of you

**A**s our 2016-17 season draws to a close, I find myself inspired beyond measure. I am inspired by the artistry Ballet Arizona's Company dancers reveal each performance. I am inspired by Phoenix's evolution into an artistic and cultural hub for all of Arizona to enjoy. Most of all, I find myself inspired by you.

You have taught me how powerful one person can be. Your contributions inspire our artistic vision and help support Ballet Arizona financially. However, the gift of your time, voice and passion are equally important.

**You are our voice.** One individual shared her love of ballet while having a small conversation with her doctor during a routine office visit. The doctor was inspired by her patient's passion for ballet and decided to attend *Romeo & Juliet* in February, and returned again to see *Today's Masters* in March. The doctor has now joined our donor family as a member of the Corps de Ballet Circles of Support. A simple conversation turned someone who didn't know about our presence into a ticket buyer and proud contributor to our cause.

**You tell our story best.** Your love of ballet and passion for the arts make you our best storytellers. How many times do you find yourself making conversation while you are in line at the grocery store or making small talk at a service appointment? Merely mentioning,

"I'm going to the ballet" opens up a whole world of opportunity for telling our story and yours. The simple act of letting people know that Phoenix has an incredible, professional ballet company right in their own community, whether they're new to the Valley or just haven't engaged with ballet before, is powerful and very inspiring.

**You are our greatest advocates.** Advocating for the arts is incredibly important now more than ever. Arts funding and education are being looked at critically on the national level; budgetary cuts to NEA funding will drastically impact the future of this organization and ballet itself. Vital NEA funding sources for Ballet Arizona are at risk. We ask you to reach out to your congressional or senate representatives and inspire them to fight against eliminating funding for the arts.

**You are family.** At Ballet Arizona, you are a huge part of our family! If I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you yet, I would be so grateful if you said hello at an upcoming performance or event. I value the opportunity to learn about you and what draws you to Ballet Arizona. I look forward to growing our relationship, learning more about each other, and continuing to inspire one another through this beautiful art form we all hold so dear.

We need your help to continue to thrive in the Valley. As you see opportunities during the course of your day, I humbly ask that you

spread the word about Ballet Arizona. Is there someone new in your neighborhood? Invite them to join you at a performance. Spreading the word will help us reach new patrons, who will in turn become supporters. Exchanging pleasantries at a social event? Share that one of your favorite interests is Ballet Arizona. A quick word is often just enough to spark interest.

The power of one, the power of you, has singular influence on our future. I cannot thank you enough for your support.

Gratefully,

Samantha Turner, Executive Director



# The School of Ballet Arizona



Carlo Valcárcel, School Director at  
The School of Ballet Arizona

I am so happy to share that on April 13, 2017, The School of Ballet Arizona received official Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) status from the United States government. This approval makes The School of Ballet Arizona one of only 25 ballet programs in the country, and the only program in the Southwest, approved to accept foreign exchange students preparing for careers as professional dancers.

This international honor has been achieved after five long years of hard work and dedication by everyone at the School. I'd like to take a moment to thank our supporters and parents, in addition to Alison Morse, Rick Hughes and our incredible faculty, who have done so much to achieve this goal.

We are more than ready for the challenge. The School of Ballet Arizona faculty includes some of the strongest teachers I have ever worked with in my life. They are all very open-minded and very cooperative. This type of collaboration and mindset gives our students the best experiences possible.

This has been a very personal journey for me. I began my dance training in Spain and was then educated across the globe – Italy, Germany, Japan, and more. Additionally, I have taught in New Zealand, Spain, Hong Kong and the United States. I have been welcomed everywhere I've worked and embraced by people from many different countries and cultures. I feel a great need to give that experience back to the School's current students and potential students that are living abroad.

Ballet does not recognize color or nationality. Ballet is an international language. It is a language that every dancer speaks. It doesn't matter if you're from the United States, Madagascar or India. A plié is a plié. An arabesque is an arabesque.

At The School of Ballet Arizona, we don't care about someone's passport. A passport is just an identification that allows you to travel. But, I do think it's incredibly important that The School of Ballet Arizona is able to welcome students from other countries and say, "Here you are. Welcome. Come learn with us and know that we are happy to have you."

We expect this to be an incredibly enriching experience for current students as well. They will be training, dancing and partnering with dancers from a melting pot of diversity and cultures. It will do so much for opening all of our minds to feel, see, and dance with the world differently.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carlos Valcárcel". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Carlos Valcárcel, School Director

# COMPANY CONNECTION *Meet dancers Alejandro and Sasha*



## Alejandro Mendez

Hometown: La Habana, Cuba  
Joined Ballet Arizona: 2013

### Where are you from and when did you start dancing?

I'm from La Habana, Cuba and I started dancing when I was nine years old.

### Why do you enjoy dancing?

I enjoy dancing because I find it's

the best way to express myself and I love to hear the applause at the end of the show.

### How long have you been with Ballet Arizona and what do you enjoy about dancing with this Company?

I've been with the Company for four seasons and I like the variety of repertoire that the Company gives to all of us.

### Of all the ballets you've performed, what has been your favorite to dance?

My favorite ballet was *Napoli* because I had the opportunity to do the principal role and it was a challenge for me.

### What's in your dance bag?

I just prefer to leave everything in the dressing room and carry only what is necessary, like my water bottle and shoes.



## Sasha Vincett

Hometown: Spring Grove, Pennsylvania  
Joined Ballet Arizona: 2007

### Where are you from and when did you start dancing?

I'm from Spring Grove, Pennsylvania. It's a small little town in south central Pennsylvania that is best known for its paper mill. I started dancing at the age of four at Jackie Gribble's School of Dance. She had a dance studio in her basement. I started

dancing more seriously at the age of nine, when I started dancing at the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet in Carlisle, PA.

### Why do you enjoy dancing?

I enjoy dancing because it lets me be extroverted when I am usually quite the introvert. Also, I've been dancing for so long that I feel like ballet has become a part of me. There is nothing better than using your body to express yourself. Feeling the music and dance as though your soul is singing is an amazing sensation.

### Do you prefer modern or classical dance?

I would say classical. I feel more comfortable dancing classical ballet, but it's also nice to get out of my comfort zone and try modern dance.



## BEHIND THE SCENES *with Leonor Texidor, Costume Director*

**Meet Leonor Texidor, Ballet Arizona's Costume Director.** For the last 16 years, Leonor has been Ballet Arizona's rock behind the scenes, creating magic on and off the stage. She specializes in bringing

fabric to life by designing costumes that complement and elevate our dancers' performances.

"I have been sewing my whole life," said Leonor. "Growing up my mother told us, 'You have to know how to do two things: to cook and to sew.' She also said that above all else, a woman should have an education and a career so she could be independent and not depend on her husband, or anyone, for anything. When I went to school, I decided to go into Costume Design and focus on fabrics & colors.

Once I finished my Masters in Barcelona, I moved back to San Juan, Puerto Rico. I had a series of jobs and mentors there that taught me everything I needed to know, and would eventually help me succeed here at Ballet Arizona. Once I graduated, the only work I could find was at the University Library. I ran the Receiving & Purchasing department. I learned to be organized, but I never felt fulfilled there. In the evenings,

I volunteered to do the costumes for a street theatre group and that's where I learned how to make something out of nothing, how to observe the way fabrics move, and how the director and the actors work.

One day I heard about a seamstress position at the local PBS station. I got the job and moved my way up the ranks. My mentor there taught me many lessons, but I think above all, she taught me patience. Patience to never say "no" to a director, and instead, give him or her alternate options.

At PBS I also learned to work for yesterday. Everything needed to be ready yesterday. At Ballet Arizona, we have the privilege of having a month or so between shows, but for TV, everything was instantaneous! If Ib or Nayon asks me for something, I try to get it to them the next day. I am just another instrument in their toolbox. I'm here to help take that weight off their shoulders so they can focus on their choreography and vision.

Ib and I have worked together for so long. We have a mutual respect for each other and listen to each other's ideas. Of course I always try and say, "But what about this?" and push the limits a bit, but I always know that I'm here to help fulfill his or any other choreographer's vision for their piece. I am here to help them convey the message, meaning and feeling that they want the audience to experience through their costumes.

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BALLET ARIZONA DONOR IMPACT REPORT

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Ballet Arizona dancer Helio Lima in Square Dance. Choreography by George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust. Photo by Alexander Iziliaev.





Ballet Arizona dancers in *Topia*. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.

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