

Q&A:  
*Artistic Director*  
*Ib Andersen*

Letter From the  
Executive Director:  
*Samantha Turner*

Performance  
Sneak Peek:  
*Juan Gabriel*

Education Feature:  
*Performance Hour*

# TURNING POINTE

## *You Are Magic*

How your support sparks  
magic on stage and in  
our community.



Gabriel Wright & Isabella Seo in rehearsal for Ib Andersen's *Juan Gabriel*.



*For more than 20 years, Ballet Arizona has held a special role in my life, so it has been so moving to know our community feels that same way.*

Happy Spring! As we embark on the last performances of our 2021-2022 season, I find myself reflecting on all that we have achieved together. When we “rewind” every performance, every program, every ballet class in our studios, it all began with you and your support. You are at the heart of what we do, the reason all of it is possible, and that is simply magic. **You are magic.**

In this issue, get a sneak peek of my new work *Juan Gabriel!* It is unlike anything I have ever choreographed and I am honored by Jacquie and Bennett Dorrance's visionary support that has brought this ballet to life.

Executive Director, Samantha Turner discusses trying new things beyond Ballet Arizona. Her leadership helped this company navigate a global pandemic, build a strong and passionate board, and will be leaving us in our best financial state. I am grateful for her service and most importantly, rising up to be the leader Ballet Arizona needed. I hope you will join me in celebrating Samantha!

Once again, thank you for your support of Ballet Arizona. I look forward to creating more magic with you and the ballet next season!

Gratefully,

Ib Andersen, Artistic Director

## BEHIND THE SCENES

*with Ib Andersen*

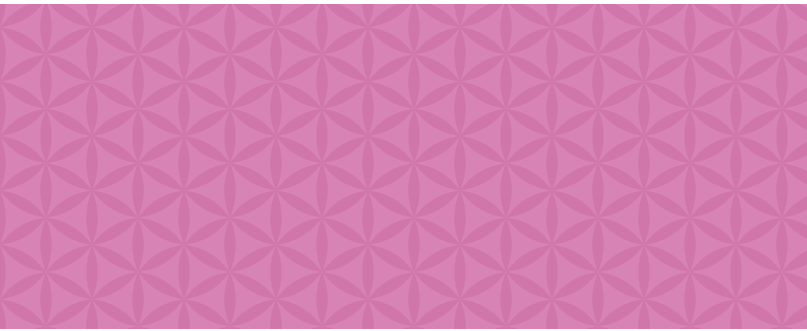
**Q:** Let's talk about your world premiere *Juan Gabriel!*

**A:** I first discovered Juan Gabriel, after his sudden death in 2016. I read his obituary in *The New York Times*, started researching him, and found this famous concert at the Palacio De Bellas Artes in Mexico City. The millions that mourned his loss overwhelmed me and I had to learn more. I watched that concert and his artistry and passion was so moving. Juan Gabriel is a very unusual artist. He has direct access into people's hearts – to have such universal appeal to any human being is fascinating to me.

We are working with Carla Fernández for costumes. She is a fashion designer based in Mexico City and dedicated to preserving and revitalizing textile legacies from the indigenous and mestizo communities of Mexico. We are building 70-80 costumes from scratch that have hand embroidery and fretwork done in Mexico. Carla brings such authenticity to the costumes through her vision and design. She grew up listening to Juan Gabriel and her initial sketches highlighted different periods in his life. From the Mexican charro, to the Tehuana flowers – plus a ton of fringe! She has also adapted things and added her personal flair. Many of her designs are so intricate; they almost need to be magnified to be seen from stage.

*Juan Gabriel*  
WORLD PREMIERE

produced by  
Jacquie & Bennett  
Dorrance



I am working with Jacob Pinholster, the Associate Dean at the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts at ASU, for the ballet videography. With each song, I have described the visual elements I want to see... so each song will have its own little world projected onto the stage. There will be a unique sense of place, through either abstract designs or landscapes, to evoke different sentiments. For some, you will feel like you are in a small village, but for the most part, this is going to look like a rock concert with a lot of vibrant energetic lighting!

**Q:** This ballet is a long time coming, how does it feel finally bringing *Juan Gabriel* to the stage?

**A:** For me, this journey began in 2016 – from concept to stage. This last week has been the most intense process. I am equally nervous, as I am excited about the result and curious to see how audiences will respond. He is an exceptional songwriter, so I hope they react with spontaneity and start singing along. I have a particular fondness for a 26-minute section because it is so high energy. This ballet has been an exploration of an artist celebrating another artist in a completely different medium. In the end, I want people to leave feeling uplifted and that it feels good to be alive!



With additional support by



Image by Jacob Pinholster Design.





Photo by Ana Hop.

## Bringing Fashion to the Stage

with **Carla Fernández**

### What drew you to pursue a life in fashion?

My first passion for fashion came from dancing. I started very young, and at 18, I was creating costumes for contemporary dance in Mexico and I loved the movement of clothing when dancing. My first approach was to dress myself and I fell in love with Mexican textiles and researching them. In the end, doing fashion and garments all started with this passion for dance and making costumes in Mexico.

### Juan Gabriel holds a special place in millions of people's hearts around the world. What does he mean to you?

Juan Gabriel is a key person for Mexicans. He is someone that always makes you stand up and either laugh, cry, or dance. Every single song he wrote and performed makes you feel something different. He came from very humble origins in Michoacán and is an example of what talent, joy, and happiness can make of you, in and outside of your country. With his feeling and gifts of writing, singing, and dancing, Juan Gabriel achieved so much in his lifetime. I also think that he opened so many paths to so many

groups. It is very important that we see Juan Gabriel as a person that was not afraid of being who he was. He was supportive of so many minority groups and became an icon for the LGBTQ+ Community.

### From the textiles to the embroidery, these costumes are stunning. What was your inspiration when designing these costumes?

The costume designs and palette are first inspired by Juan Gabriel and what he loved - and he loved all of Mexico. If

you see how he dressed, he used flowers from the south, fringes from the north, and different design elements from the middle of the country. He was, as I am, passionate about the crafts of Mexico and I am sure, if he were still alive, we would be having this conversation. Mexico is a very strong country in terms of craft. We also have the most ethnically diverse groups, after China and India, but you have to understand that Mexico is a much smaller country.

I love handmade techniques because they are so unique. Some of them have 3,000 years of development and I believe that tradition is not static. I truly believe those traditions are alive and it is why creating these costumes makes me feel so special. Juan Gabriel knew those traditions are alive. He knew he needed to stand up for them and those traditions new and contemporary. That was my main goal and it comes from a shared passion for Mexican crafts.



Sketches by Carla Fernández.



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Samantha Turner*

## **Trying something new!**

Spring is nature’s glorious reminder to us that growth and change are part of the rhythm of life. Cactus flowers are dotting the landscape, demonstrating the beautiful surprises we experience when new things spring forth.

For Ballet Arizona, this spring is full of wonderful opportunities for you to try something new! The world premiere of *Juan Gabriel* will provide many of us the opportunity to more deeply discover and fall in love with an artist, whose legacy permeates across the world. It is our hope this groundbreaking new work will inspire and spark curiosity among those who have not yet explored the world of ballet. Of course, the excitement continues, as we will end our season at Desert Botanical Garden with Ib Andersen’s re-imagined *Round*. These performances are a triumphant showcase of what is possible when beauty and innovation come together.

Ballet Arizona is so much more than what you see on stage. In this issue, we spotlight our *Performance Hour* program, which welcomes students into our home on Washington Street to not just experience ballet, but learn about the career possibilities

in the arts – on stage, behind the scenes, and in our offices. Who knows what young person might be inspired to try something new – to become a future costume designer, stage manager, or development professional!

Speaking of trying new things, it is time for me to do just that. In a message to you earlier this year, I shared that this would be my last year with Ballet Arizona, after nine wonderful seasons. I am an adventurer, of sorts, and I have been feeling the call to explore something new. With the company in the strongest position in its history, it seems like an ideal time for change and personal growth. I have you to thank for making the ballet what it is today through your generous and steadfast support.

***I look forward to seeing you all at future performances as I join you as one of Ballet Arizona’s great fans.***

Gratefully,

Samantha Turner, Executive Director







# JOHN & ELLEN FORD LEGACY

Ballet Arizona is honored to celebrate the legacy of John and Ellen Ford and the impact of their support.

It is without a doubt that the magic of ballet is made that much more special when accompanied by live music. The Fords were the catalyst for bringing live music to our ballet productions, beginning with underwriting the orchestra for Ib Andersen's 2003 premiere of *Romeo @ Juliet*. Their live music continued every year following until John's passing in 2014.

This past December, we learned our dear Ellen had passed and that the Ford family

remembered Ballet Arizona in their estate with a legacy gift of \$500,000.

This past February, in a meaningful

*"I am overwhelmed and deeply honored. They stood by my side since the very beginning of my tenure as artistic director. They were quiet and humble in their philanthropy – never wanting any recognition."*

– Ib Andersen, Artistic Director

moment, our production of *Romeo @ Juliet* was dedicated to their loving memory. Hearing the beautiful Prokofiev score, it was impossible to not be filled with gratitude knowing they brought that sound to life 20 years ago. It is with tremendous appreciation that we bestow upon them the recognition they have deserved these many years.

## PERFORMANCE HOUR

### A Student's Peek Behind the Curtain

Adults and children alike feel the magic that exists watching ballet. Filled with glittering costumes and incredible physical feats, dance has the power to capture hearts with just a single performance. But even still, parents and educators continue to ask, "how are these experiences relevant for children who do not choose artistic pursuits?" Ballet Arizona's Performance Hour program is the answer.

Performance Hour gives students and teachers a glimpse into the world of dance through an immersive experience, allowing attendees to examine all of the working parts of a professional ballet company. Complete with a ballet class and rehearsal viewing, the program also introduces

students to the administrative departments, the costume shop, and production shop.

Experiencing these behind the scenes elements, encourages students to picture themselves in different roles within the arts world and challenges them to see the arts from a broader lens.

Programs such as Performance Hour open the door to not only create artists, but cultivate the next generation of arts advocates, benefactors, and leaders.

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# HAZEL HARE AWARD OF ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

**H**azel Hare was a strong, dedicated woman with a deep passion for the ballet. A generous supporter since 1996, Hazel arranged a transformational gift to Ballet Arizona through her estate, the Hazel A.S. Hare Charitable Trust, establishing an endowment of more than \$4 million that helps permanently fund the artistry she so deeply loved. In 2018, Ballet Arizona created the Hazel Hare Award of Artistic Excellence, given to two dancers annually whose spirit echoes the strength, dedication, and passion that Hazel exemplified throughout her life.

Artistic Director, Ib Andersen, awarded this year's recipients, Serafin Castro and Katelyn May, at Ballet Arizona's 2022 *Dance with Me Gala* this past April at Heard Museum.



## Serafin Castro

Hometown: Villa Clara Cuba  
Joined Ballet Arizona: 2018

### *When did you start dancing?*

I started dancing at the age of 7. My family on my father's side is very musical, and I started out playing the trumpet. The Escuela Vocacional de Arte Olga Alonso was holding music

auditions and they also had ballet auditions, so I snuck away, stepped into the studio to audition and was accepted! The teacher saw my potential and took it upon herself to try and convince my parents. I trained there for five years and went on to study at the Escuela Nacional de Ballet de Cuba.

### *Do you have a hidden talent?*

My hidden talent (not so hidden!) is cooking and baking. I love to prepare fancy meals for my family and friends – especially anything from Chef Thomas Keller's cookbook!

### *What does receiving the Hazel Hare Award mean to you?*

It is an honor and a fantastic achievement to be recognized for my work as an artist. To receive "Artistic Excellence" from Ib Andersen, who I admire so much, makes me totally happy and grateful. This motivates me to keep working hard and fuels me to perform at the top of my level with all my passion, all my heart on each role and every show. Now it's time to shine even brighter, motivate my fellow dancers to be the best, and together build our company even stronger. Me and my family are extremely thankful. THANK YOU!



## Katelyn May

Hometown: Lake Oswego, Oregon  
Joined Ballet Arizona: 2021

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

I had a wonderful, nurturing teacher growing up who instilled in all of her students that hard work produces great results. From a young age I was very goal oriented so her advice mixed with

the challenge of ballet always kept me inspired and focused. I have been dancing professionally for 13 years and that same philosophy still drives me today!

### *Do you have any current obsessions?*

My current TV obsession is watching true crime documentaries! I also read whatever I can get my hands on – I am currently reading *What She Knew* by Gilly MacMillan.

### *What does receiving the Hazel Hare Award mean to you?*

Receiving the Hazel Hare Award of Artistic Excellence is an absolute honor. I am so grateful to the company for giving me such a precious gift. It has always been my goal to exhibit the utmost professionalism throughout my career and winning this award both humbles me, and kindles my fire to keep striving toward that goal.



# BALLET ARIZONA 2021-2022 SEASON UPCOMING DONOR EVENTS

**May 5** (All Prima Circle Members) | Symphony Hall  
*Juan Gabriel* Opening Night Reception

**May 5 – May 8** | Symphony Hall  
*Juan Gabriel*

**May 6 – May 8** (All Prima Circle Members) | Symphony Hall  
*Juan Gabriel* Pre-Performance Receptions

**May 12** (\$1,000 & Up) | Desert Botanical Garden  
Round Dress Rehearsal Viewing

**May 17** (All Prima Circle Members) | Desert Botanical Garden  
Round Opening Night Reception

**May 17 – June 2** | Desert Botanical Garden  
*Round: Reimagined*

**BALLET**  
ARIZONA

IB ANDERSEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Ballet Arizona dancers. Photo by Tim Fuller.

**BALLET**  
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Ballet Arizona presents

## ROUND: REIMAGINED FOR A NEW STAGE

**May 17 – June 2, 2022**

at Desert Botanical Garden

Inspired by his 2016 world premiere, *Round*, Ib Andersen plans to revisit this unparalleled work with re-imagined choreography that embraces and showcases the vast natural backdrop of the desert.

Visit [balletaz.org](http://balletaz.org) or call **602.381.1096** for tickets.

Opening Night Sponsor

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