

AZ Giving Spotlight: Ib Andersen of Ballet Arizona

Written by Joanna Brathwaite

Ballet Arizona is a dance company that prides themselves on innovative and professional ballet while serving the community through educational outreach programs. Ib Andersen, the Artistic Director and former dancer for the New York City Ballet talks more about Ballet Arizona's impact on the Valley.



AFM: What are some of the Educational and Community Outreach Programs that Ballet Arizona does?

IA: Free and open to the public, "Ballet Under the Stars" allows Arizona communities to enjoy dance in a unique outdoor setting complete with a stage, lighting, costumes and beautiful Arizona weather. As arts education can play a critical role in a child's academic and social development, we also offer student matinees which expose approximately 7,000 students annually. In addition, Angel Tickets are made available free of charge to clients from service organizations and children and families from community centers in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

AFM: What are Community Angel Nights?

IA: "Community Angel Night" is often thought of as one show of Nutcracker – traditionally the evening before the opening night of Nutcracker is filled with underprivileged families whose attendance was made possible by donations from supporters of the ballet. But what many people do not know is that the ballet makes available a minimum of 4,000 tickets free of charge every season to families in need every year. There are over 150 agencies that we work with to provide these live art opportunities.

AFM: How has Ballet Arizona affected the Valley?

IA: Ballet Arizona believes that a performance can change lives. We offer our audiences and participants the opportunity to expand their imagination on a unique journey to a place where it has never been, experiencing art in a way that surpasses words. We are also dedicated to serving the people of central Arizona through our [Education and Community Outreach](#) programs, which touch the lives of more than 35,000 children and more than 20,000 adults each year.

AFM: For children and adults interested in a ballet career, what does Ballet Arizona have to offer them?

IA: The tradition of ballet comes alive at the School of Ballet Arizona, the official dance academy associated with the professional Company. The School of Ballet Arizona offers instruction on the highest level – where internationally recognized artists serve as instructors. From children to adults, profession or pleasure, we offer world class instruction and performance opportunities. Instruction includes classes throughout the school year for ages 4 and up, as well as open classes for adults and teens.

AFM: What are some of Ballet Arizona's goals for the future?

IA: Ballet Arizona is thrilled to be in its new home, the Ballet Arizona Center for Dance, made possible by generous, forward-thinking donors and the City of Phoenix. With this wonderful new facility, Ballet Arizona hopes to be a gateway for the community to experience the beauty, athleticism and artistry of dance. Here the community has the opportunity to engage with Ballet Arizona in entirely new ways – observing professional rehearsals, gaining insight into the creative process, and encountering dance more personally than ever before. The general public is welcomed for free performances and underserved communities will be invited to what might be their first-ever ballet experience.