ANNUAL REPORT
2020 2021
A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

What a year it has been! There are some dates that will always be etched in my mind, dates like March 17th, 2020, which is the day we shut down our operations due to the COVID pandemic. The next few months were... dark! But then, as is customary for our organization, we focused on the problem, evaluated our options, and envisioned a path forward. With the guidance of our Infectious Disease Physician, Dr. Brett Jaggers, the box started to take shape. It was a tight one, and yet a safe one. Now our challenge was to produce art within the confines of that space.

Our administrators were back from a short furlough on September 5th, and the dancers on September 28th. The next challenge was creating new works, and works of substance, that fit within the safety protocols of AGMA, the dancers' union, and Dr. Jaggers. There were more challenges on the horizon, like not being allowed to have choreographers in our facility and not being able to perform existing works as they didn't conform to the pods/safe distance protocols of the pandemic. The audience capacity was initially capped to 10% in Studio K and at the Grand Ballroom of the Cox Business Center, growing to 20% by March 2021. Add in a new air sanitizing system in both our facilities, required face masks, added space for our dancers to change, and reformatted shows to make them flow without intermissions, and you get a snapshot of the 2020/21 season.

In spite of the challenges of envisioning such a season, the performances themselves were among the best I have witnessed in my 26 years at Tulsa Ballet. We had dances made especially for these unprecedented times, conceived to be danced with masks, created by choreographers in their living rooms and even their bedrooms, from places as far away as Amsterdam, Rome, London, and New York. Of course a season would not be complete without a new work by Ma Cong. During the course of this journey, we explored new corners of the dance universe by commissioning the first hip-hop work for our company. Is there a place we haven't been yet? While our commitment to tradition remains as strong as ever, our pledge of creating new works is unwavering. Our curiosity... inexhaustible! Our dancers and administrators faced seemingly insurmountable challenges. But again, team Tulsa Ballet thrives on challenges.

Lastly, in my letter from last year I shared with you that our principal objective for FY21 would be to finish the season perfectly poised for a rebound. That entailed keeping in touch with our audience this season through continued high quality performances, and of course with our donors through the successful accomplishment of our major fundraiser, Icons and Idols. It also entailed keeping continuity among our staff and dancers. And, just as importantly, it required us to finishing this fiscal year, just like last fiscal year, in good financial health. Well, we accomplished all our objectives, and, in spite of the ever shifting nature of the pandemic, everything went according to plan!

In closing, on behalf of everybody at Tulsa Ballet I want to thank you for your support. Without our “family” to sustain us during this challenging season, there would be no future for Tulsa Ballet. We thank you profusely and we promise you that, no matter how many lemons life throws at us, we will continue making Limoncello out of them!

Marcello Angelini
George Kaiser Family Foundation
Artistic Director
CREATIONS REIMAGINED
October 29-November 22, 2020 | Studio K
Hindrance, Choreography: Yury Yanowsky
To the End, Choreography: Ma Cong
Limoncello, Choreography: Annabelle Lopez Ochoa

THE LOST NUTCRACKER
December 17-20, 2020 | Cox Business Center
Choreography: Luciano Cannito
Holiday Boogie, Choreography: Ma Cong
Little Story, Choreography: Joshua L. Peugh

SIGNATURE SERIES
March 5-14, 2021 | Studio K
What If?, Choreography: Andrew McNicol
At the End Of, Choreography: Yury Yanowsky
Parhelia, Choreography: Jennifer Archibald

THE CELEBRATION
May 13-16, 2021 | Cox Business Center
Prawn-Watching, Choreography: Val Caniparoli
Na Floresta, Choreography: Nacho Duato
Going for Baroque, Choreography: Val Caniparoli
Don Quixote, Choreography: Marius Petipa
Age of Innocence, Choreography: Edwaard Liang
Onegin, Choreography: John Cranko
Blue Flame, Choreography: Ma Cong
Strictly Gershwin, Choreography: Derek Deane
While You Were Gone, Choreography: Jennifer Weber

The artists of Tulsa Ballet in While You Were Gone, by Jennifer Weber. Photo by Bethany Kirby.

Madalina Stoica and Arman Zazyan in What If?, by Andrew McNicol. Photo by Bethany Kirby.
ARTISTIC STAFF

Marcello Angelini  
Artistic Director

Daniela Buson  
Assistant Artistic Director

Susan Frei  
Ballet Mistress & Artistic Coordinator

Alfonso Martín  
TBI Artistic Manager & Ballet Master

Ma Cong  
Resident Choreographer

Peter Stafford Wilson  
Principal Conductor

MAIN COMPANY

Madalina Stoica  
Principal | Romania

Arman Zazyan  
Principal | Armenia

Maine Kawashima  
Soloist | Japan

Chandler Proctor  
Soloist | USA

Jaimi Cullen  
Demi-Soloist | USA

Regina Montgomery  
Demi-Soloist | USA

Chong Sun  
Demi-Soloist | China

William Beckham  
Corps de Ballet | USA

Sasha Chernjavsky  
Corps de Ballet | USA

Jun Masuda  
Corps de Ballet | Japan

Giulia Neri  
Corps de Ballet | Italy

Aina Oki  
Corps de Ballet | Japan

Nao Ota  
Corps de Ballet | Japan

Gianluca Benedetti  
Corps de Ballet | Italy

Maria Coelho  
Apprentice | Brazil

Adrian Cruz  
Corps de Ballet | Spain

Michael Paradiso  
Corps de Ballet | USA

Yuki Toda  
Corps de Ballet | Japan

Daniele Arrivabene  
Apprentice | Italy

Julia Crosby  
Apprentice | USA

Simone Pompignoli  
Apprentice | Italy

TULSA BALLET II

Guillermo Dominguez  
Criado

Iris Rocio  
Davila

Carlos de Miguel

Yuika Fujimoto

Sumika Fujiwara

Nanami Inoue

Ritsuko Ogino

Guido Sarnataro

Natali Taht

Mattia Teora

Angel Vizcaino

Sabrina Yap
**YEAR IN REVIEW**

**JUNE 2020**
When the COVID-19 pandemic forced theater closures and event cancellations around the world, Tulsa Ballet quickly pivoted and became one of the very first ballet companies to mount online streams of previously recorded productions. Following successful online presentations in April and May, Tulsa Ballet presented *Romeo and Juliet* to rave reviews and international praise in June 2020. While the Tulsa Ballet Center for Dance Education was unfortunately forced to cancel its annual summer intensive, Marcello and the leadership team employed an epidemiologist, Dr. Brett Jaggers, to assist in the development of new safety protocols, in the hopes of reopening the facilities in fall. Meanwhile, the company established a Critical Support Fund to fill the deficit created by the loss of earned revenue.

**JULY 2020**
The leadership team continued to develop an extensive and thorough safety plan in accordance to CDC guidelines. They outlined a variety of budgets and timelines for the upcoming season to be ahead of the game and prepared for changes in the trajectory of the pandemic. Virtual streams of previously recorded productions in July included fan-favorites *Age of Innocence* and *Peter and the Wolf,* more than 10,000 viewers enjoyed Tulsa Ballet’s streaming performances over the summer. In late July, the Center for Dance Education was able to host small groups of students for a two-week session called Get Back to Dance.

**AUGUST 2020**
By August, it became clear that Tulsa Public Schools would not open for in person classes. This meant that typical outreach classes and performances for students would need to be modified. Again, Tulsa Ballet pivoted. The education team developed special videos and materials for students that could be accessed in classrooms or from the students’ homes, which not only provided children with engaging educational experiences but also a fun, creative outlet. Tulsa Ballet also received word that CARES Act funding through the City of Tulsa had been approved, allowing for HVAC upgrades to both the Brookside and Broken Arrow campuses. These upgrades included the highest standard of MERV 13 filtration in all units and an Auto-Cleaning Ionization Air Purifying System throughout each of our facilities, designed to purify indoor air by eliminating airborne pathogens.

**SEPTEMBER 2020**
With strict safety protocols and a budgetary plan for the season implemented, Tulsa Ballet was able to bring back all furloughed staff in September. Dancers returned to the studios to work in small groups, or “pods,” with face masks required at all times. Meanwhile, the fall semester of CDE classes began and the halls were once again buzzing with activity.

**OCTOBER 2020**
The dancers began to take class and rehearse new, innovative works in groups of eight. Choreographers created these new works from their homes, virtually connected to each of the three studios via a network of cameras and web-based applications like Zoom. Annabelle Lopez Ochoa choreographed from her home in Amsterdam, while Yury Yanowsky worked with the dancers on his piece from his home in Boston. Ma Cong was the only one working with dancers in person, one “pod” at a time while the other dancers learned from separate studios via Zoom.

**NOVEMBER 2020**
In November, Tulsa Ballet opened its doors to audiences for the first time since February, albeit to 30 attendees per performance. *Creations Reimagined,* featuring Annabelle Lopez Ochoa’s *Limoncello,* Yury Yanowsky’s *Hindrance,* and Ma Cong’s *To the End,* premiered to both in-person theater-goers and online viewers.

**DECEMBER 2020**
For the first time in its 64-year history, Tulsa Ballet did not perform any version of *The Nutcracker.* With audience capacity still limited, the Performing Arts Center still closed to visitors, and the full company unable to dance together, we needed a creative solution in order to present a holiday production. Marcello contracted famed Italian choreographer Luciano Cannito to work remotely with the dancers, developing the aptly titled *The Lost Nutcracker,* which included pieces by Ma Cong and Joshua L. Peugh. This was one of the first events held in the newly remodeled Cox Business Convention Center Grand Hall.

**JANUARY 2021**
As news of the vaccine rollout in Tulsa ushered in a new year, Marcello began working on two more productions for the season, which remained unplanned and unscheduled at that time. While the pandemic still loomed large, we began to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

**FEBRUARY 2021**
Three incredibly talented choreographers began work on Tulsa Ballet’s *Signature Series* 2021. Up-and-coming choreographer Andrew McNicol began developing the World Premiere of *What If?* from his home in London. Yury Yanowsky, choreographer of *Creations Reimagined’s Hindrance,* restaged his piece at the end of, which was previously slated for premiere in April of 2020. Jennifer Archibald’s *PARHELIA,* an audience favorite from September 2019, was also restaged for presentation at the March *Signature Series.*

**MARCH 2021**
Due to working in an educational environment, Tulsa Ballet’s company dancers were eligible for vaccines in phase 2, beginning in early March. Meanwhile, Tulsa Ballet audiences were delighted to be back in the theater; the *Signature Series* performances were held in Studio K for over two weeks to groups of 60 audience members.

**APRIL 2021**
With many Tulsa Ballet supporters reporting vaccinations, and area COVID-19 cases on the decline, we began to prepare for the return of large scale productions at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center in Fall 2021. Marcello presented the 2021-2022 season to eager subscribers during a virtual REVEAL event, which saw more renewing ticket holders in a single night than ever before.

**MAY 2021**
The final month of our fiscal year saw the *The Celebration,* an evening of excerpts from productions performed over the past 25 years of Marcello’s tenure at Tulsa Ballet, coupled with a brand new work by hip hop choreographer Jennifer Weber. The *Celebration* opened at the Cox Business Center, allowing Tulsa Ballet to present to a larger audience while still maintaining social distancing protocols. We also held our annual fundraiser *Icons & Idols* at the Cox Business Center in May, which exceeded fundraising goals in spite of the many challenges this past year presented. Tulsa Ballet was honored and humbled by the outpouring of support in this pandemic year, which allowed us to finish the season in the black and in good financial health.
The information presented here is based on Tulsa Ballet’s unaudited revenue and expenses for Fiscal Year 2021. Note that the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on operations and programming leading to a 72% decrease in revenue from tickets and tuition, and a 27% decrease in overall revenue, in comparison with the last pre-pandemic year, FY 2019. Major reductions in expenses, along with Paycheck Protection Program and other CARES Act funding, allowed Tulsa Ballet to pay down debt from previous seasons and end the fiscal year with a small surplus.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Chief Executive Officer  Marcello Angelini
Board Chair  Susie Wellendorf
Immediate Past Chair  Janet Selser
Executive Vice Chair  Robyn Devore
Finance Chair/Treasurer  Frauke Petersen
Corporate Secretary  Kenneth Skillman
Audit Chair  Lou Ann Gibson
Board Governance Chair  Janet Selser
Strategic Planning Chair  Linda Strong
Parliamentarian  Skip Teel

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive Committee Advisors
Billie Barnett, Larry Chambers, Betty Pirnat, Hannah Robson

Bylaws/Policy Special Committee Chair
Jacqui Haglund

Icons and Idols Special Committee Chair
Jeff Hartman

PRESIDENTS’ & CHAIRS EMERITI
Mary Barnes, Billie Barnett, Cheryl Forrest, Ramez Hakim, Leanne Helmerich, Betty Pirnat, Hannah Robson, Bill Schonacher, Janet Selser, Georgia Snoke, Skip Teel, Kayla Vaughn, Mollie Williford

ELECTED DIRECTORS
Bailey Austin Bird, Romel Chatterjee, Robyn Devore, Matt Farris, Stephanie Forrest, Lou Ann Gibson, Jeff Hartman, Betsy Hendershot, Nicole Hopkins, Laura Hulse, Jeannine Irwin, Soohyun Jin, David Karimian, Andy Kinslow, Abby Kurin, Kirby Lehman, Andrew Malati, Nicole Morgan, Lisa Owens, Kathleen Pence, Hilary Penrod, Frauke Petersen, Porscha Radcliffe, Shannon Richards, Kenneth Skillman, Julie Smith, Dave Sopark, Sandy Stava, Sheri Stinson, Crystal Stovall, Linda Strong, Melanie Tate, Susan Thomas, Cassie Reese Tipton, Susie Wellendorf, Wally Whaling, Diana Wolff

ADVISORY DIRECTORS
Byron Bighorse, Mary Wheeler Brown, Pat Bryson, Dennis Cameron, Larry Chambers, Kirk Clasing, Jake Dollarhide, Charlotte Edmundson, Jacqui Haglund, Peggy Helmerich, Lou Kerr, Bonnie Klein, Suzanne Kneale, Thomas Landrum, Michael Noland, Donna O’Rourke, Beth Rainey, William Smith, Belynda Spitzer, Barbara Sylvan, Kathy West, Monica Williford, Will Woodring

CHAIR APPOINTEES
Annie Chang, Jennifer Conway, Allie Killblane, Susan Lindberg, Danielle Minnick, Ciore Taylor

HONORARY DIRECTORS
Ann Graves, Jackie Kouri

TULSA BALLET STAFF

ARTISTIC

Artistic Director  Marcello Angelini
Assistant Artistic Director  Daniela Buson
Ballet Mistress and Artistic Coordinator  Susan Frei
TBII Artistic Manager and Ballet Master  Alfonso Martin
Resident Choreographer  Ma Cong
Principal Conductor  Peter Stafford Wilson
Company Manager  Tom Domenici
Principal Company Pianist  Andrew Lahti

PRODUCTION

Director of Production  Joseph Futral
Production Coordinator  Diana Williams
Costume Director  Shawn Sturdevant
Wardrobe Manager  Amy Zvacek
Wardrobe Supervisor  Tori Highfill
Costume Assistant  Maddie Rice

ADMINISTRATION

Managing Director  Scott Black
General Manager  Stacey Jenkins
Director of Finance  Svetlana Kot
Accountant  Cheri Barrington
Accountant  Stephanie Carter
Director of Development  Amy Miller
Special Events Manager  Katie Grassmyer
Corporate and Foundation Relations Manager  Julie Etchison

Development Coordinator  Clifton Baker
Development Assistant  Meg Cameron
Marketing Manager  Bethany Kirby
Marketing Manager  Lacy Applegate
Graphic Designer  Jessica Hanun
Box Office Coordinator  Shannon Huntley
Outbound Sales Associate  Mindy Robertson
Receptionist  Marissa Mitchell

CENTER FOR DANCE EDUCATION

Director of Education  Arlene Minkhorst
Education Manager  Cindy Chanslor
Education and Outreach Manager  Colleen Lahti
Dance Faculty
Carla Lopez, Julie Marquet, Beatrice Sebelin, Wang Yi
CDE Administrative Assistants
Tiffany Boes, Rhonda Huber, Anna Zherebpenko

THANK YOU TO TULSA BALLET’S IN-KIND SPONSORS