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## 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

*OUR MISSION: To foster a greater understanding of classical ballet, live orchestral music and the arts through education and performances.*

### *FROM OUR PRESIDENT*

As our Board of Directors began to plan in earnest for our 2019-2020 season, we had no way of foreseeing how much life would change for the Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley — and the world — in 2020.

We welcomed 115 students to our summer classes and 207 to our school-year session. By the fall, we were rehearsing for our 51<sup>st</sup> production of *The Nutcracker*, featuring guest artists Devon Teuscher, principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre, as the Sugar Plum Fairy; and Alexandre Hammoudi, soloist with the American Ballet Theatre, as the Sugar Plum Cavalier. We were pleased to welcome back guest artists Tevin Johnson as the Harlequin and Candy Cane, and Stephaen Hood as the Snow King and Arabian. Our ballet students were thrilled to perform before 4,000 area students and 3,000 arts patrons.

By mid-March 2020, life ground to a halt as we grappled with how to deal with the spread of COVID-19. Due to the closure of all Pennsylvania public schools, the Ballet Guild cancelled classes and rehearsals and quickly offered online classes. Normal life, as we then understood it, changed in the course of a few days. In short, the pandemic upended our world, as it did for so many arts organizations. We were forced to close our studios to students, cancel our spring ballet and reimagine our live performance of *The Nutcracker* in 2020 so a cherished holiday tradition could continue.

While this has been a very trying year, we have been reminded constantly how fortunate we are because of our many loyal donors, volunteers and staff. Thanks to you, we were able to successfully pivot and continue to serve our students, area schools and all who cherish the arts.

We are grateful for your continued support and look forward to brighter days ahead.

With gratitude,

Jennifer L. Altemose, Esq., President

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

### Dance Training

*Students of all ages experience classical ballet under the direction of Karen Kroninger Knerr, artistic director since 2007.*

- **Pre-Professional Division.** This intense course of study emphasizes the development of ballet skills. During the 2019-2020 school-year season, 37 students participated and five seniors graduated. During the 2019 summer session, 44 students attended.
- **Community Division.** Ballet and jazz classes are offered to children and adults. During the 2019-2020 school-year season, 170 individuals participated and 71 students attended the summer session.
- **Financial aid.** In 2019-2020, the Ballet Guild provided \$37,390 in scholarships.
- **Male students.** To encourage participation, boys are invited to attend classes for free. In 2019-2020, one boy participated in the Pre-Professional Division school-year season, two participated in the summer season and one graduated. Twenty-two boys participated in the Community Division school-year season and 12 in the summer session.
- **Effect of Covid-19.** After we were forced to close our studios to students in March 2020 due to COVID-19, we quickly pivoted to offer on-line training with a positive response from students.

### Performance

*The Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley has performed *The Nutcracker* every holiday season since 1968. The Ballet Guild also presents a spring ballet and collaborates throughout the year with other performing arts organizations to bring the beauty of ballet and orchestral music to a variety of audiences.*

- **The Nutcracker 2019.** The 2019 production of *The Nutcracker* featured guest artists Devon Teuscher, Alexandre Hammoudi, Stephane Hood and Tevin Johnson. The Southside Sinfonietta performed the entire score and two treble choirs accompanied. Nearly 3,000 patrons attended.
- **Peter Pan.** The Ballet Guild was pleased to announce *Peter Pan, The Ballet*, had been chosen for its annual spring performance. Because of safety concerns related to COVID-19, however, the Ballet Guild was forced to postpone the production.



### Arts Education

*Each year, approximately 4,000 area students thrill to the magic and precision of *The Nutcracker*. This unique cultural opportunity includes student and nationally acclaimed dancers, a live orchestra, school choirs and informal curtain talks about the production and ballet. Study guides allow teachers to extend this arts education experience.*

- **2019 The Nutcracker for Students.** In 2019, approximately 4,000 students attended a performance of *The Nutcracker* for free or at a heavily discounted price. During intermission, there was a curtain talk about the performance. Teachers received a study guide to extend the arts education experience. Students were drawn from Northampton, Lehigh, Bucks, Berks, Montgomery, Carbon, Monroe, Luzerne and Schuylkill counties, Pennsylvania; and Hunterdon and Mercer counties, New Jersey.

## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley/Pennsylvania Youth Ballet is to “Foster a greater understanding of classical ballet, live orchestral music and the arts through education and performances.” Central to the mission is a dedication to reducing barriers to participation in cultural enrichment activities by all children regardless of socioeconomic background. The Ballet Guild is the only nonprofit organization in the Lehigh Valley offering both dance training and performances. Pre-professional classes are open to serious ballet students and community classes are offered for ages three through adult. To further encourage diverse participation, need-based aid is available on a case-by-case basis and boys attend classes for free.

The Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley was founded in 1958 and performed *The Nutcracker* for the first time in 1968 at Allentown Symphony Hall, sponsored by The Junior League of the Lehigh Valley under the direction of Alexi Ramov. Through the years, countless Lehigh Valley children and adults have performed in *The Nutcracker* under the direction of Alexi Ramov, Oleg Briansky



and Mireille Briane, Aram Manukyan, and Karen Kroninger Knerr, the current artistic director. In 2018, the Ballet Guild celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> consecutive production of *The Nutcracker*. Since 1968, more than 100,000 students have attended. Currently, the Ballet Guild hosts approximately 4,000 school students annually. An additional 3,000 patrons attend public performances. A second ballet is performed in the spring for school students and the public. The Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley is largely volunteer driven with approximately 50 volunteers annually.

## FY 2019-2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

(Ending June 30, 2020)

REVENUE	FY 2020	FY 2019
Contributions and Grants	\$ 27,382	\$ 42,694
Program Services	323,963	291,012
Investment	13	6
Other	14,495	10,789
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$365,853</b>	<b>\$344,501</b>
EXPENSES	FY 2020	FY 2019
Program Services	\$317,882	\$311,341
Administration	61,624	67,321
Fundraising	7,140	3,404
Other	0	0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$386,646</b>	<b>\$382,066</b>

## *FACULTY AND STAFF*

### **Karen Kroninger Knerr, Artistic Director**

Karen Kroninger Knerr, artistic director since 2007, holds a BFA in dance from the Juilliard School where she trained in Graham, Taylor and Limon techniques. In 2019, Karen received her Certification in Progressing Ballet Technique. She was a principal dancer with the Albany Berkshire Ballet, where she performed lead roles in *Cinderella* and *Coppélia*, as well as performing *Girl at Mirror* for the opening of the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, MA. In addition, Karen was a member of the Ellen Sinopoli Dance Company. She has worked with and performed works by Dennis Nahat, Laura Dean, Frances Patrelli and Bill T. Jones. Karen holds an Intermedia Certification in Labanotation and is an American Ballet Theatre (ABT) Certified Teacher, having completed intensive training in the ABT National Training Curriculum, a high-quality artistic training that includes the basics of dancer health and child development. She developed the outreach program, Discover Dance, for BGLV. Karen teaches Ballet Guild students from beginner to advanced level and has choreographed various works including youth programs for the Allentown Symphony.



### **Faculty**

- Joshua Frumkin
- Meghan McCutcheon
- Adriane Orcutt-Fraser
- Carol Jolley Sarik
- Kelli Yandolino

### **Staff**

- Tanja Fetzer Howard, Office Manager
- Kristin Dundon, Costume Mistress
- Gerry Kasten, Office Assistant
- Patricia McAndrew, Archivist/Historian

## **2019-2020 Board of Directors**

### **Officers**

- Jennifer L. Altemose, Esq., President
- Tjasa C. Ritchey, Vice President
- Lori George, Secretary
- Julian Ritchey, Treasurer

### **Members**

- Amy Belet
- Amanda Lovell
- Emily Quiros
- Kim Shively
- Elisabeth Sollog
- Joyce Yoder