

STEVEN & ELIZABETH WISTRICH, DIRECTORS

cityballet  
OF SAN DIEGO

# Strategic Plan

Season 32 | 2024-2025



SEASON  
32  
2024-2025

Iago Breschi and Ariana Gonzalez  
Photo: Chelsea Penyak

## Overview

This City Ballet of San Diego strategic plan is an essential element to enable us to fulfill our mission and realize our vision.

**Mission:** The mission of City Ballet of San Diego is to provide excellence in professional ballet for cultural enhancement through performances, education, and outreach programs to diverse communities.

**Vision:** The vision of City Ballet of San Diego is to create a world-class ballet company, immediately recognizable as San Diego's unique resource for vital, creative, and professional ballet, both contemporary and classical, on local, regional, and national levels. City Ballet of San Diego envisions becoming the ballet of choice in San Diego.

The Board of Directors and senior staff members update this plan each season (usually at the Board of Director's summer retreat) to reflect goals and capture initiatives for the next five years. These goals and initiatives reflect City Ballet of San Diego's values.

**Serving the Community:** We are dedicated to serving the San Diego community, enhancing the cultural enrichment and quality of life for every resident. Our audience members at performances, our students enrolled in education programs, and our community members participating in outreach events are at the center of everything we do.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** We strive to serve *everyone* in San Diego. We create a safe and inclusive environment where patrons, artists, students, staff members, and volunteers are respected, and their diverse backgrounds are celebrated. We design programs and initiatives to address inequities, enabling us to represent and serve all segments of the San Diego community.

**Uncompromising Quality and Integrity:** We incorporate the finest artistic traditions of the world's greatest ballet companies, lending the City Ballet of San Diego name only to works of art that are of the highest professional caliber and achievement. Programs are developed and presented by trained professionals and accredited staff members, always respecting the communities being served.

We use a gap-analysis process to prepare this strategic plan. We define a desired end-state, perform a needs analysis, and then define key change initiatives to achieve the desired end-state. Strategic goals and initiatives are scoped to align with the capacity of the organization (personnel, facilities, funding, etc.) to successfully implement the desired changes.

Our strategic goals and key initiatives are organized around three major pillars:

1. Cultural Enhancement
2. Community Service
3. Operational Excellence

## Pillar #1: Cultural Enhancement

We are dedicated to presenting the ballet art form at its finest, from ballet classics to contemporary masterworks to all-new world premieres. We thrive in the creation and exploration of ballet in a variety of cultural contexts and performing those ballets for San Diego's diverse communities.

### ***Objectives and Key Change Initiatives***

1. Expand our extensive repertoire with the addition of works from choreographers who better represent and reflect the communities we serve. Present those ballets with dance artists who also represent and reflect those communities. Key change initiatives are:
  - Shape the composition of our company of professional dance artists to reflect the San Diego communities we serve. Organically develop dance artists from diverse backgrounds through apprenticeships and targeted scholarships, and recruit dance artists from diverse communities.
  - Grow our repertoire of ballets by adding ballets choreographed by people from diverse communities and backgrounds.
  - Each season, include at least one new ballet from our resident choreographers, Elizabeth Wistrich and Geoffrey Gonzalez, celebrating their unique voices in roles traditionally filled by non-Hispanic white males.
2. Enhance accessibility to our programs by offering performances and education programs at locations throughout San Diego. Key change initiatives are:
  - Transition from our downtown San Diego home theater model for all performances to offering performances at venues throughout San Diego.
  - Develop programs for smaller stages and less traditional performance venues so our programming better matches the theaters and facilities available within more San Diego communities.
3. Build a broader audience by improving accessibility to in-theater ballet performances, welcoming new communities that traditionally do not attend performances. Key change initiatives are:
  - Develop partnerships with community ballet schools and programs to offer deeply reduced-price tickets to in-theater performances, with specific emphasis on schools and programs that serve culturally diverse communities.
  - Provide free access to ballet performances and pre-performance lectures to community members who would not ordinarily be able to attend a performance, with specific emphasis on low socioeconomic status families and San Diego's large active-duty military community.

## Pillar #2: Community Service

We are committed to bring world-class ballet performances, exceptional ballet training, and engaging ballet education programs to every segment of San Diego community. Our programs are in service of these communities, tailored to meet the communities' needs and interests, and offered in safe locations and accessible venues.

### **Objectives and Key Change Initiatives**

1. Engage San Diego communities with a full spectrum of ballet education programs, offered in the communities being served. Key change initiatives are:
  - Expand the *Discover a Dancer* residency program at Title I elementary schools, increasing the number of underprivileged children receiving free ballet attire, free ballet instruction, and participating in a free end-of-session performance.
  - Introduce children to the ballet art form through reduced-price in-theater performances of ballets designed specifically for young children. Offer these performances in communities underserved by the arts, offering free tickets to low socioeconomic status families.
  - In partnership with UCSD Epstein Family Amphitheater, build an enduring program allowing pre-professional *Summer Intensive* students to perform on-stage at the conclusion of their three-week training program. Showcase this next generation of dance artists with the San Diego community by offering free tickets to their performance.
2. Enhance the ballet training of preprofessional and professional dance artists to offer a vibrant exploration and well-rounded understanding of the intersection of the ballet art form and cultural diversity. Key change initiatives are:
  - As we grow our repertoire of ballets by choreographers from diverse communities and backgrounds, include education/training opportunities with repetiteurs/experts on those ballets to accurately present the ballet, provide authentic insights, and offer culturally appropriate perspectives.
  - Increase opportunities for preprofessional dance artists to be part of ballet productions beyond the traditional *Nutcracker*. Each season, offer a new collection of ballets to enhance ballet training. Grow their artistic vocabulary through a diverse collection of composers and choreographers. Continuously build their self-awareness and confidence with on-stage performances throughout the season.

## Pillar #3: Operational Excellence

To fulfill our cultural enrichment and community service responsibilities, we must be an organized, well-run business focused on stakeholder's needs. Our not-for-profit business is built upon principles of proficiency, accountability, transparency, diversity, respect, and inclusion.

### ***Objectives and Key Change Initiatives***

1. Maintain a strong financial position with a balanced budget, by managing cash flow to meet all obligations, and by incurring no debt from current operations. Continue post COVID-19 pandemic recovery with increased earned income and contributed income, working to a 50% earned income / 50% contributed income balance. Key change initiatives are:
  - Grow audiences with enhanced outreach to communities that are not part of our existing audience base. Leverage opportunities our multiple performance venues offer to connect with new audiences in San Diego's diverse communities.
  - Increase ticket sales revenue through enhanced seat management and dynamic ticket pricing. Provide discount ticket offers tailored to specific communities, bringing in new audience members who would otherwise not attend a ballet performance.
  - Increase earned income by adding contracted performances at theaters outside of San Diego and alternative venues not traditionally considered for live ballet performances.
2. Recruit and develop artistic and professional staff members to best serve patrons, customers, community members, and business partners. Key change initiatives are:
  - Actively recruit from under-represented communities when filling vacant artistic and staff positions, with specific emphasis to seek out qualified Black candidates.
  - Increase the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our artistic and staff members to enhance their professional careers and, when appropriate, achieve professional certification.
3. Enhance fiscal management, accounting, and bookkeeping practices to achieve an unqualified clean financial audit. Key change initiatives are:
  - Transition to a professional bookkeeping service, capturing all income, expense, and capital equipment/property records in one system providing a single authoritative data source.
  - Expand grant opportunities by achieving an unqualified clean financial audit by the end of Season 32.
4. Serve artists, patrons, customers, and community members from a fully accessible facility commensurate with the world-class quality of City Ballet of San Diego's performances and programs. Provide employees and volunteers with a creative, productive, efficient, and safe workspace. Key change initiatives are:
  - Explore and develop facility options that meet forecasted needs, including fully accessible classrooms, rehearsal space, dressing rooms, and offices.
  - Plan and launch a capital campaign to raise funds needed to secure a new facility, configure/remodel the space to meet our needs, and relocate to the new facility.

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SEASON 32  
2024-2025

A SEASON OF LOVE AND OBSESSION

## A Midsummer Night's Dream

LOVE MAKES FOOLS OF US ALL

July 19-20, 2024

## Dracula

LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE

November 9-16, 2024

## The Nutcracker

A MAGNIFICENT HOLIDAY TRADITION

December 20-23, 2024

## Swan Lake Act II

BALLET'S MOST ICONIC TRAGIC LOVE STORY

March 8-12, 2025

## CARMEN

THE PASSION AND THE JEALOUSY

May 3-4, 2025

George Balanchine's *Emeralds* from *Jewels*  
Photo: Chelsea Penyak

