



BalletNova Center for Dance
STRATEGIC PLAN FY 2021–2026





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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

To the BalletNova Community:

Greetings from the Board of Directors.

In 2019, the Board of Directors began to look into the future and gather suggestions from our faculty, staff and students to plan for the commemoration of our 40th year in business. While looking for ways to improve our offerings and serve our students better, we never could have anticipated what 2020 would send our way. Now as we begin this 40th anniversary, we are grateful for the talent of our leadership, the dedication of our faculty, and the fortitude and adaptability of our student body, without whom we could not anticipate another 40 years.

The following Strategic Plan is presented with all of the optimism we feel in having inherited such a strong and resilient operation. As we have adapted to the present situation because of the nimble and amazing leadership of our new Artistic Director, and as we have borne the immediate financial strain related to the government-imposed shutdown, we nevertheless feel optimistic that this year will prove to be our most exciting yet. We

have plans to build on our heritage and our talent, expand our operations and reputation from one of local to one of national prominence, and continue to be a true beacon for Dance in the Northern Virginia community.

We could not take this long view without the continuing support of our community of dancers and their supporters, our "family" to which we remain grateful and appreciative for everything you give, in both time and contributions, to make us as successful as we are. This strategic plan is dedicated to our community. I am thankful for your assistance, dedication and resilience, and very grateful to have the opportunity to lead you into the next chapter of BalletNova's exciting future!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrienne Geis'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'A'.

Adrienne Geis
President
BalletNova Center for Dance
Board of Directors



INTRODUCTION

BalletNova Center for Dance

An understanding of the now, with a bright future ahead.

For forty years, BalletNova has proven itself to be a shining light within the arts community in the DC Metropolitan area, and for this we feel so very fortunate. Students who have trained at our school have moved onward to have successful careers in the arts and beyond. This is not solely due to the exceptional training they receive at BalletNova, rather, it is the experiences they receive which sets our students apart from other dance conservatories. With our multiple performing opportunities, robust outreach programming, and our goal to develop a diverse student and faculty population, dancers of BalletNova become strong, educated, disciplined, and ready to achieve new heights.

With this said, our work is not nearly done.

As our strategic plan is proudly set into play, arts organizations around the globe are presented with challenges unlike any seen in our lifetime. BalletNova not only accepts this as an actuality, but also embraces the challenge as a means to move forward.

Our goal is to do so with the fullest of creativity, compassion, and commitment to the art we love. These are the values that have kept BalletNova thriving for forty years, and these are the values that shall be kept in place as we look toward a brave new future.

BalletNova is a team. A wholly unified team. We are unique in that our esteemed faculty, staff, and Board collectively come together from all walks of life to do the work necessary to provide the utmost of exceptional dance training, while seizing the times and challenges presented with grace, integrity, humbleness, and proven grit. The groundwork we lay in our strategic plan reflects this in order to benefit our student body, patrons, and the DC Metropolitan area on the whole.

Growing our community, one step at a time, we present BalletNova's strategic plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Powell".

Matthew Powell
Artistic Director

“I BELIEVE DANCERS ARE LIKE SNOWFLAKES, NO TWO ARE ALIKE. MY GOAL AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF BALLETNOVA IS TO PROVIDE A NURTURING SPACE FOR ALL WHO WISH TO STUDY THE ART OF CLASSICAL BALLET, WHILE ADDITIONALLY CHALLENGING OUR STUDENTS TO REACH NEW HEIGHTS VIA DISCIPLINE, DEDICATION, AND THE UTMOST OF ARTISTRY.”

— MATTHEW POWELL, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
BALLETNOVA CENTER FOR DANCE





MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

MISSION

To provide unparalleled training and education for our dancers by offering the finest in programming and events as the premier center for dance excellence in Northern Virginia.

VISION

A nationally-recognized ballet conservatory that honors the past, embraces the now, and celebrates the future.

VALUES

ARTISTRY

BalletNova is a school with artistry and heart. Our artists push themselves to achieve their dreams, laying the foundation to make BalletNova a haven for the arts in our community through hard work, dedication, and humanity.

DEDICATION

Our dancers emerge from BalletNova with confidence, discipline, and the utmost sense of artistry, whether or not they enter the dance profession. For those who choose to enter dance as a profession, the dance world will recognize our students by their outstanding training, integrity, and character. This increases our visibility on a national and international level and solidifies BalletNova as a staple in our community. For those who choose another direction, BalletNova will remain a home for them as they apply the discipline they gain at the school in their chosen profession.

COMMUNITY

An arts organization is only as strong as its surrounding community. By building healthy and diverse relationships among students, Board members, parents, patrons, and other brave ambassadors of the arts, we honor BalletNova as a national institution and elevate our passion for the art we love.



BALLETNOVA: HONORING THE PAST, EMBRACING THE NOW, CELEBRATING THE FUTURE

BalletNova’s 2021–2026 Strategic Plan provides an opportunity for us to tell our story. It is a story that we are proud of as it honors our past, embraces the now, and celebrates the future. We hope you enjoy learning about us.

HONORING THE PAST

We provide this strategic plan during BalletNova’s 40th anniversary year. Looking back, we have a lot to be thankful for. BalletNova has earned a proud place in the world of dance education thanks to our visionary founders Kenneth and Kathy Fredgren. They believed BalletNova should be a space in the community where anyone who wants to dance can have the opportunity to do so. Building on that vision, we aspire to be the premier dance center for

the arts community, not only in Northern Virginia but on a national level.

As of this writing, the world is in the midst of a global pandemic. Like others, we – the BalletNova family – continue to adjust our programming, training, and offerings to ensure the safety of our students and faculty while providing the best in dance for our community. Moreover, despite the many challenges brought about by COVID-19, we at BalletNova continue to learn, to innovate, and to create so that we can emerge from this difficult period even stronger than we were before. The 40th anniversary year provides an occasion to reflect on our past as we chart a course toward a brighter future together, and we could not be more excited!

EMBRACING THE NOW

The COVID-19 state of emergency in 2020 had a significant impact on BalletNova's programming and events. It tested the viability of the organization and the mettle of its staff and Board.

BalletNova's Board of Directors went to exceptional lengths to maintain organizational stability during this crisis. Board Members met weekly, and the Board President and Treasurer stayed in close contact with the Artistic Director to ensure that BalletNova was taking advantage of every available COVID-19 related financial resource to help maintain physical operations during the imposed physical shutdown brought on by the state-of-emergency.

Regular communication from the Artistic Director to BalletNova's community reassured its many stakeholders as the organization navigated this time of uncertainty.

This allowed for smooth transitions as programs needed to move to virtual platforms and eventually into hybrid formats.

While, as of this writing, the pandemic crisis is still far from over, we at BalletNova have learned to adapt to the new reality we face. We continue to take seriously our responsibility to our students, faculty, patrons, and stakeholders while we maintain our commitment to excellence.

CELEBRATING THE FUTURE

By the time we get to 2026, we hope to have achieved an end state that is shaped by the current crisis, characterized by resilience and an unstoppable commitment to excellence, and recognized by BalletNova's established position as a nationally-recognized ballet conservatory. We look forward to what lies ahead. Please join us as we work toward achieving our vision!



COVID-19—WORKING THROUGH A CRISIS

On Friday, March 13, 2020, after evaluating information from federal and local health officials, BalletNova quickly decided to halt in-person classes for Youth, Teen, and Pre-Professional students, with adult classes halted soon after. In the face of this adversity, BalletNova staff quickly rallied to present a full roster of free live-streamed classes starting the following Monday, March 16. While it was initially assumed local dancers in the BalletNova family would be the primary beneficiaries of these offerings, students as far away as Portugal, Israel, and Italy, as well as throughout the United States, tuned in for inspiring instruction coupled with the sense of community dancers gain from the ritual of taking daily class.

During this period, BalletNova's Artistic Director made sure that he was a consistent presence on Facebook to greet followers and reassure the community that BalletNova operations were continuing. His presence and demeanor were inspirational and the response was truly overwhelming.

Soon after the shift to virtual programming, BalletNova developed a COVID-19 relief campaign and the support from the BalletNova community and beyond was extraordinary. Individual donations large and small helped BalletNova overcome the loss of income from cancelled programming. The relief campaign included creative fundraising efforts, including the design and sale of BalletNova apparel by the graduating seniors in the Conservatory Division. Donations through BalletNova Facebook Live classes also added to the success of this campaign.

All of BalletNova's spring performances were cancelled due to the state of emergency, but students did create and perform works through digital platforms. Graduating seniors were honored with a special celebration including an outdoor photo shoot; a video chat sendoff from professional dancer and alumna Mary Beth Hansohn; and a socially-distanced, community "graduation" on BalletNova's front portico.

The summer of 2020 continued to present challenges, with the continued necessity of virtual classes to keep the public safe. BalletNova created an International Summer Intensive with guest artists from the professional ballet, musical theatre, and contemporary dance worlds. These amazing teachers brought their extensive knowledge and expertise in the form of master classes and question-and-answer sessions. A total of 25 internationally renowned guest artists shared their knowledge and wisdom with the students of BalletNova.

The reopening of BalletNova for in-person instruction was approached with a great deal of care for our students and the broader community. After extensive research into local cleaning companies, BalletNova engaged WellNest, a professional janitorial company with numerous hours of training completed around COVID-19 and cleaning for health. As Certified Infection Prevention experts, WellNest provided plans, consultation, janitorial services, and training to ensure BalletNova could open its doors safely. Prior to opening, BalletNova conducted two training workshops for its staff to walk them through the protocols that would be followed when the studio reopened for live classes.



CORE STRENGTHS: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

HISTORY

Three years after establishing the Arlington Center for Dance in 1981, Kenneth and Kathy Fredgren founded the non-profit Center Dance Company to provide performance opportunities for students and mount quality, affordable dance productions. Upon the Fredgrens' retirement in 2002, the Arlington Center for Dance merged with the Center Dance Company to become a single non-profit entity. In 2008, the studio moved to its current Carlin Springs Road location and officially changed its name to BalletNova Center for Dance.

ARTISTIC PROGRAMS

BalletNova Center for Dance is a premier dance education center located in Falls Church, Virginia. The Center's primary mission is to provide a rigorous, comprehensive dance education for dancers of all ages. We are firmly committed to supporting and mentoring our dancers both personally and technically/artistically. Our curriculum incorporates a variety of training methods and techniques including classical ballet, modern, jazz, hip-hop, Pilates, yoga, and more. BalletNova offers a range of dance and exercise classes through five categories, or divisions, of training: Young Children Division (ages 3–8), Youth Divisions (ages 9–12), Teen Division (13–16), Pre-Professional (ages 8–18), and Adult (ages 15 and older). We have also recently introduced a Young Men's Program (ages 7–12). The majority of the Center's students are from the surrounding communities of Falls Church, Arlington, Alexandria, and Fairfax County.

PERFORMANCES

Through its performances, BalletNova provides opportunities for professional choreographers and dancers to create and perform dance pieces; trains young dancers for employment with a professional company; and raises public awareness of dance as an art form. Students of all levels in the Pre-Professional Program perform in BalletNova's annual production of *The Nutcracker* and students in BalletNova's Conservatory Division and some upper-level Junior Division students participate in our Spring performance. At the end of the academic year, BalletNova hosts a Technical Demonstration performance, which includes students from the entire Pre-Professional Program. Students perform class dances, jazz, and modern pieces, and older Conservatory Division dancers perform ballet variations. The Center also gives free public performances throughout the year, during such events as Clarendon Day and the Tysons Corner Family Fair.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In addition to delivering a premier dance education to our students, BalletNova participates in a number of events throughout the year designed to engage the local community and provide exposure to dance as an art form and our artistic program offerings. In the past, such events have included Free Ticket Programs, Girl Scout Programs, a Financial Aid and Scholarship Program, Free Open Houses, and Free Performances at local schools and businesses. Leading up to its 40th Anniversary, BalletNova will have a number of outreach programs designed to re-engage with the community in the aftermath of the COVID-19 shutdown and inform the community of its plans for the anniversary celebration.

DEVELOPMENT

BalletNova leadership, staff, and Board work in tandem to plan and execute a range of activities designed to meet the organization's short-, medium-, and long-term development goals. These activities ensure that the organization can grow and expand, while continuing to meet the dance and dance education needs of its broad community. BalletNova's development goals are organized to align with the lifespan of the strategic plan:

- **Short-Term (2020–2021):** In the short-term, BalletNova is focused on commemorating our 40th anniversary year as we continue to work through the challenges brought about by COVID-19. While we embrace these challenges, we also look forward to celebrating the future!
- **Mid-Term (2021–2023):** Following the 40th anniversary event, we will focus on increasing our revenue to meet our 2023 fundraising goals as we continue to build and develop our family of supporters.
- **Long-Term (2023–2026):** Our long-term planning period coincides with the planning period of the strategic plan. By 2026, we aim to be financially healthy with an increased base of patrons so that BalletNova can continue to provide the best in dance education for our Northern Virginia and broader community.

BOARD/GOVERNANCE

BalletNova is governed by a Board of Directors that was established in 2002 as part of the restructuring. Today, the Board's governance structure includes a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Bylaws allow for 13 members of the Board. As of June 2020, the Board has eight members.

The BalletNova Bylaws establish one standing committee, the Executive Committee, comprising the Board Officers. However, the practice of the current Board Chairman is to include everyone in decisions and consider them part of the Executive Committee. Historically, the Board has established a number of other ad-hoc committees and task forces, as necessary. At present, the Board has established committees to focus on the following areas:

- Finance
- Governance and Recruiting
- Development/Marketing/Fundraising
- Strategic Planning

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

BalletNova employs 14 staff who administer the educational dance curriculum of the center as well as its day-to-day functioning. This includes an Artistic Director who provides the artistic and managerial leadership of BalletNova and a Director of Enrichment and Adult Programs who oversees these two areas. Other administrative staff include a Registration and Front Desk Manager, a Program and Marketing Coordinator, a Development Associate and Outreach Coordinator, an Operations Manager, a Finance Manager, and several Front Desk Staff who work limited hours. There are occasional jobs done for pay, but it's mostly in trade for credits toward either tuition (for parents who work the desk) or the class pass (for adult students).

BalletNova also employs approximately 30 teachers who are a mix of employees and independent contractors. BalletNova boasts an international faculty with representation from Taiwan, Chile, Great Britain, Argentina, Brazil, and Turkmenistan.



“BALLETNOVA IS A PLACE LIKE NO OTHER; IT IS MY SECOND HOME AND FAMILY AND IT WILL FOREVER REMAIN IN MY HEART AS A PLACE OF LEARNING AND COMFORT.”

— GRACE COGLEY, BALLETNOVA ALUM

In the Spring of 2020, as the Northern Virginia region began to stay home in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, BalletNova was forced to cancel in-person programming, including its much anticipated, full-length “Sleeping Beauty.” This mammoth undertaking was in the midst of rehearsals, production meetings, set building, and designing and sewing costumes for the cast. Though performances were put on hold, the BalletNova costume shop did not stop working. Sewing machines kept humming and sewed masks instead of tutus. Countless masks were sewn and shipped to healthcare facilities in hotspots such as New York City, Miami, and Detroit, and marked just one way BalletNova gives back to the community.

BalletNova gives back to the community on a daily basis. Since its inception, BalletNova has been celebrated as a place where anyone who wants to, can dance. It is well known in the metro DC region for year-round classes in multiple genres of dance for all ages, with a continued commitment to give financial aid to students who need assistance. These need-based awards ensure that dancers keep dancing no matter what their financial situation.

The community also benefits from BalletNova’s professional productions in area theatres. These performances have reasonably priced tickets, including discounts to seniors, students, and the military to ensure the community has access to live dance performance. BalletNova also has a robust free ticket program that ensures all citizens have the opportunity to attend live dance performances regardless of financial circumstances.

The Fredgren Theatre, BalletNova’s in-house black box studio theatre, serves as a major resource for independent artists and performing groups that represent a wide variety of cultures and genres beyond ballet. Performances include contemporary, hip hop, flamenco, and classical Indian dance, reflecting the area’s rich cultural diversity.

In December 2019, five BalletNova dancers, who are all children of military service members, were honored to perform at the Pentagon for a special Nutcracker-themed holiday event. They were accompanied by an Air Force string quartet and were fortunate to meet the Secretary of the Air Force and speak with military members in attendance. There are many other occasions throughout the year that BalletNova’s dancers appear, including events such as fairs and festivals, as well as at libraries, preschools, and senior centers. To augment our community offerings, BalletNova also plans to add free performances in its Fredgren Studio Theatre for school and community groups for a special “in-reach program.”

Increased technical ability such as high-powered WiFi and dedicated laptops for every studio will enable BalletNova to virtually bring outreach programming to area schools, especially as hybrid and virtual learning become more common.

BalletNova is a vital part of the arts ecosystem in the greater DC metropolitan area. Many local dance professionals teach, choreograph, and perform at the facility, and local dance companies utilize the studios and Fredgren Studio Theatre to create and perform new works.

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

“THANK YOU BALLETNova DANCE CENTER AND VETTIX FOR KICKING OFF A HOLIDAY TRADITION FOR OUR FAMILY. SO SWEET AND WHAT A BEAUTIFUL PERFORMANCE!”





STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: GROUNDWORK FOR THE FUTURE

We recognize that the current environment presents both a unique moment in time as well as an opportunity for BalletNova to reimagine our goals and how we can achieve them. The drivers are twofold: one, the COVID-19 pandemic and the desire to “build back better” and two, the desire to create an institution that is more diverse and inclusive, in order to best serve our community.

BalletNova’s strategic goals are new. Our priorities are to ensure that the organization can: 1) recover from the economic effects of COVID-19; 2) plan for the future, including the commemoration of

the organization’s 40th year of operation; 3) function efficiently as an organization; 4) provide a safe and fair workplace for its employees; 5) continue to offer high-quality dance education to its community, and 6) mount high-quality performances.

GOAL #1: RAISE ARTISTIC STANDARDS

Providing our students with the means to achieve beyond their own expectations is our number one goal.

- Enable Student Success
- Introduce New Programming
- Collaborate with Fellow Artists



We recognize that excellence in training is the foundation for student success. To that end, BalletNova will undergo a complete review and revision of its syllabus by the end of 2021 in order to offer the most comprehensive curriculum that develops the whole student. This will ensure that we are offering our dancers the skills they need to be successful in the field on a competitive level. BalletNova strives to increase its presence on the local and national level by providing exceptional artistic experiences for dancers and audiences alike. For instance, giving students the opportunity to learn and perform a ballet by George Balanchine will allow dancers to physically experience the work of a dance legend, while offering the community to see a work from the annals of dance history. By bringing to fruition our collaborative outreach efforts with American Youth Philharmonic and Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, BalletNova has set a goal of having at least one performance with live musical accompaniment a year. With this comprehensive plan, BalletNova aims to set a new standard for artistic achievement.

GOAL #2: INCREASE OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS

Since our inception, BalletNova has been celebrated as a place where anyone who wants to, can dance. To do this, we will increase our outreach and communication efforts to enable our ability to continue giving back to the community.

- Give Back to the Community
- Bolster Development/Fundraising
- Facilitate Partnerships

BalletNova is reflective of its surrounding community, and giving back is a touchstone of the organization. Each year, we provide a number of free public performances so all who wish can enjoy dance. In the last year, we provided free performances at the Pentagon for our military service members, at the Tysons Corner Family Fair, and at Clarendon Day. We have also provided Free Ticket Programs, Girl Scout Programs, a Financial Aid and Scholarship Program, Free Open Houses, and Free Performances at local schools and businesses. We will continue these outreach activities and perform in both traditional and unconventional venues in order to expand upon our audience base. Additionally, in order to reach as many in our community as possible, BalletNova will translate its website and promotional materials into different languages to support our diverse student body and patrons as a means to promote inclusion. Our goal is to make BalletNova as accessible to as many audiences as possible so that everyone can experience the joy of dance. Further, by forging collaborative relationships with partners, BalletNova will be able to expand our resources, strengthen the

arts in our region, and double the impact of our mission. To bring these activities to fruition, the organization has outlined short-, medium-, and long-term fundraising goals.

GOAL #3: MAKE AN IMPACT

Making a difference is what will position BalletNova to be a dance conservatory that is recognized on the national level.

- Innovate Through our Daily Practices
- Motivate Others by our Example
- Lead Through Excellence

We will accomplish this goal by being a leader within the dance profession. Innovation will be our guiding light. We are not afraid to step out into new territory to pursue new and different ideas. We will introduce a new student choreography project whereby faculty members mentor students in the creation of a new work. We will expose students to teachers and artists who are at the top of the field of classical ballet. We will increase the amount of in-studio performances and classwork showcases. Our aim is to inspire, to motivate, and to lead so that a national-level spotlight can shine on BalletNova.

EN POINTE TO NEW HEIGHTS!



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