

PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Board of Directors in Attendance: Geoffrey Bond, Steffie Bozic, Beth Brown, Kara Brown Davis, Barbara Cottrell, Jim Crockard, Susan Cruz, Debra Dermody, Dawn Fleischner, Dona Hotopp, Doug Kreps, Dena LaMar, Mary McKinney Flaherty, LeRoy Metz, Kathleen Miclot, Melonie Nance, Sandra Nicholas, Sarah Pietragallo, Stephanie Sciullo, Shelley Taylor, Ayana Teter, Betsy Teti, Becky Torbin (Board Emeritus), David Tuthill

Board of Directors Not in Attendance: Phil Barr, Camera Bartolotta, Rich Beaty, Edwin Beachler, Carolyn Byham, Connie Cesario, Jay Costa, Mary Finger, Freddie Fu, Celia Gerard, David Hall, Michael LaRocco, Peggy McKnight, Natalie Mihalek, Richard Rauh, Guy Reschenthaler, Lisa Saperstein, Vincent Silvaggio, Hilary Tyson, Joseph Vincent, Winthrop Watson, Vonda Wright

PBT Leadership in Attendance: Janet Campbell, Curtis Dunn, Harris Ferris, Kati Gigler, Margie Grundvig, Susan Jaffe, Katie Potts, Aaron Rinsema, Jay Romano, Christy Rowing, Tanaz Walendziewicz

PBT Guests in Attendance: Theresa Ruth Howard

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Call to Order, Welcome, Approval of December 15, 2020 Minutes -
Mary McKinney Flaherty called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

Approval of December 15, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Shelley Taylor made the motion, second by David Tuthill to approve the December 15, 2020 Board of Directors meeting minutes. Passed.

January 31, 2021 Financials and Cashflow Report -

Jay Romano summarized the six page finance report included in the packet of materials distributed to the Board.

Statement of Financial Position -

Overall, PBT is in a solid financial position. Unrestricted cash is currently \$610K with \$2.4M in restricted. PBT's Endowment sits at \$9.4M, a large increase year-over-year due to stock market performance. PBT's total assets are currently \$24.5M. PBT received a notification from the Small Business Administration approving PBT's request to convert the PPP loan into a grant. Therefore, the entire \$1M PBT received in PPP is now recognized as government funding.

Statement of Activities -

Jay Romano briefed the Board on the Employee Retention Tax Credit. PBT applied for the tax credit and anticipates receiving \$1M in tax credits from the period of January 1 through June 30. PBT hopes to receive an additional \$350K in tax credits from the 4th quarter in 2020. Payroll in January decreased because of these tax credits. If PBT cannot use what has been allocated, the IRS will issue a check for the difference. PBT anticipates a check from the IRS in late April or early May and then again in the summer. Regarding expenses, they are month-to-month. PBT has had a few performance expenses, such as CMOA performances and planning the Open Air series in May. When the Board last met in December, PBT was showing a shortfall of \$15,500, which increased to a projected surplus of \$129K. PBT anticipates the surplus will continue to increase and hopefully end at \$1.5M, including the tax credits, between now and the end of the fiscal year.

The Board briefly discussed the impact not performing has on the financials, due to rising venue costs. Not performing has been helpful financially for the past 13 months.

2021-22 Season -

Susan Jaffe, Harris Ferris and Jay Romano presented 21-22 season programming and financials.

Susan Jaffe stated 21-22 season programming will be centered around celebrating female choreographers. The season will open with a mixed rep program at the Benedum with works by Helen Pickett, Jennifer Archibald and George Balanchine's *Diamonds*. PBT will continue the season with *The Nutcracker* in December and Derek Deane's *Alice in Wonderland* in February. The Company will move to August Wilson African American Cultural Center for a mixed rep program that includes Staycee Pearl's *Skin+Saltwater*, as well as pieces choreographed by

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Gemma Bond, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Twyla Tharp and Azsure Barton. Susan Jaffe stated PBT will pivot to using AWAACC as a space to showcase innovative works. The season will end with *Swan Lake* at the Benedum in May 2022. The production will be staged by Susan Jaffe. As for Hartwood Acres in August, the Company will perform a mix of classical and contemporary pieces including *Paquita* and Bournonville's *Napoli*.

Harris Ferris and Jay Romano presented the 21-22 season direct production budget, which is a three page document included in the packet of materials. The season is based on the premise that PBT will be able to perform at the theater in the fall. PBT is prepared for plan B if performing in the theater is not an option, due to COVID-19. Tanaz Walendziewicz stated projected ticket sales are based on a normal year at the theater, meaning full capacity at the Benedum with no social distancing and/or capped capacity protocols. Since PBT does not sell out the theater in a normal year, full capacity entails 47-52% of theater capacity.

Discussion regarding the 21-22 season was held. Shelley Taylor stated ticket sales for mixed rep programming seem overly optimistic given PBT's history with mixed rep programming. LeRoy Metz stated general concern for ticket sales, specifically mixed rep. PBT will need to push mixed rep programming and generate buzz. Kathleen Miclot suggested bolstering social media to help generate buzz around programming. Dawn Fleischner stated PBT has witnessed the positive impact increased advertising funds can have on a mixed rep program using *Mozart in Motion* as an example. Dona Hotopp suggested using PBT's education department and programs as a way to generate audience awareness and buzz. Tanaz Walendziewicz stated PBT is planning on leveraging Susan Jaffe's appointment as Artistic Director and her first season to jumpstart marketing for the 21-22 season.

Approval of 21-22 season programming and direct production budget

LeRoy Metz made the motion, second by Dona Hotopp to approve the 21-22 season programming and production budget. Passed.

Introduction to Theresa Ruth Howard -

Harris Ferris and Susan Jaffe had the pleasure of introducing a special guest, Theresa Ruth Howard.

Theresa Ruth Howard danced with Dance Theatre of Harlem, and was a founding member of Armitage Gone! Dance. She is the founder and curator of the Memoirs of Blacks in Ballet. She has taught at the American Dance Festival, Sarah Lawrence College, and was an artist in residence at Hollins University. She is a contributing editor to Dance Magazine and has written for Pointe, and the Source magazines as well as the Italian dance Magazine Expressions. Ms. Howard also teaches both Ballet and Contemporary dance internationally.

PBT is excited to partake in an organization-wide partnership with Theresa Ruth Howard generously funded by Arts, Education & Equity Fund. Theresa Ruth Howard is a leader in the

field of diversity, equity and inclusion in the arts. She has done this work at ballet companies around the world, including Dutch National Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, San Francisco Ballet and others. All facets of the PBT team will begin training modules with Theresa Ruth Howard, including Company dancers, administrative staff, School faculty and artistic faculty for at least the next six months.

Theresa Ruth Howard introduced herself to the Board and provided links to MoBBallet's [Constellation Project](#) and MoBBallet's upcoming [town hall](#) check-in.

PBT School Report -

Ayana Teter, Aaron Rinsema and Margie Grundvig provided an update on PBT School.

Margie Grundvig provided a variety of PBTS updates. Virtual auditions for PBT's Intensive Summer Program (ISP) were held in January and February. School faculty will begin American Ballet Theatre curriculum training in June. In March, the School will hold parent observation week, as well as begin distributing information regarding PBTS spring shows in May during Open Air.

Aaron Rinsema stated PBTS will launch some in-person Community Division options in April. Mr. Rinsema stated enrollment has basically stayed the same since the Board last met, but the School expects increased enrollment with upcoming *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake* workshops. These workshops will hopefully replace the enrollment bump PBTS receives in Children's Division enrollment after *The Nutcracker*. PBT's six week national audition tour was converted to a virtual format due to COVID-19 but it has been quite successful between PBT School's video submission portal and Zoom auditions. PBTS has auditioned approximately 340 students, which is great given the circumstances.

Education and Community Engagement and Equity Project Transformation Team Report(s) -

Kati Gigler gave a report on the Education and Community Engagement Department, as well as the Equity Project Transformation Team.

Education and Community Engagement -

The Education and Community Engagement department was able to provide a variety of increased programming virtually for *The Nutcracker* vs. in theater for both adult and child audiences. PBT served over 8,200 people during the student matinee, compared to approximately 1,000 people in the theater. Additionally, the department was able to provide more in-depth learning materials for the virtual matinee. Given the success and expanded reach the virtual student matinee had, the department is planning a spring matinee to keep momentum going. The department had great success with an increase in accessibility programs during the run as well. This spring, Adaptive Dance classes are using an ASL

interpreter for the first time ever. The department will continue to increase the use of ASL interpretation and closed captioning options for future programming.

Equity Project Transformation Team -

Kati Gigler thanked the Arts, Education & Equity Fund for generously funding Theresa Ruth Howard's consultancy with PBT. Theresa's work with PBT dovetails nicely with PBT's Transformation Team subcommittee work. Subcommittees are making progress on IDEA goals and created timelines to achieve some goals by the end of the fiscal year, including incorporating the [CROWN Act](#), policies regarding hiring recruitment, website accessibility and more. Regarding community learning, the Transformation Team's book club will meet this Friday to discuss *The Warmth of Other Suns*. A coffee chat as part of the team's "Heroes Through History" series celebrating Black excellence in ballet will be held on Feb. 24 at 11:00 a.m. The team will end Black History Month and the "Heroes Through History" series with a virtual viewing of Dance Theatre of Harlem's *Giselle*. As always, the Board is welcome to join any of these community learning events.

Due to time constraints, additional information can be found in the reports included in the packet of materials.

Executive Director Report -

Harris Ferris gave the executive director report.

Harris Ferris discussed the role he and Susan Jaffe have as leaders at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. They are paving the way as leaders at PBT, creating a more vibrant and diverse culture that focuses on and values people. Since December, Mr. Ferris and Ms. Jaffe have been receiving leadership coaching, which has been a tremendous advantage and has been extremely helpful for Mr. Ferris.

Regarding upcoming events, PBT continues to make progress on Open Air: Celebrating the Performing Arts. The two week celebration at Flagstaff Hill in Schenley Park includes performances from PBT, PBT School, Staycee Pearl Dance Project, Attack Theatre, Hill Dance Academy Theatre, Hope Academy, Lemington Gospel Choir, West Hill Symphonic Band and more. Other big projects include capturing over \$300K in deferred revenue. PBT is working to monetize subscription dollars and capture them before the end of the fiscal year and the 21-22 subscription campaign.

Artistic Director Report -

Susan Jaffe gave the artistic director report.

The dancers returned to PBT on January 11 and remained on contract through February 14. During this time, the Company rehearsed *Bolero* for Carnegie Museum of Art, as well as pieces from Open Air last September that were filmed at WQED. Christian Lockerman filmed 6 pieces

for two films that will be made available to subscribers and the general public. Christian Lockerman also filmed PBT's virtual *Nutcracker* production last December. PBT had the opportunity to perform again at Carnegie Museum of Art in the Hall of Sculpture. All 7 shows were sold out and PBT received wonderful feedback from patrons. Susan Jaffe has also been working on PBT's apprenticeship program, which officially launched two days ago. PBT already received 100 submissions to review in that time. Susan Jaffe will also watch the upper student levels for apprentice program positions. Kati Gigler left a link in the chat to a wonderful [talk](#) Charles Barker gave on *Bolero*.

Tanaz Walendziewicz provided more information about film distribution, which is all part of an effort to retain subscription dollars and convert deferred revenue. The *Bolero* film will include a mini documentary featuring commentary from a CMOA curator in the Hall of Sculpture, as well as PBT's performance. *Bolero* will air for subscribers March 22-28 before being available to the general public April 5-11. Patrons need to be on PBT's email list, as a private link will be distributed. Filming at WQED was divided into two films, each including three pieces. The first film will be distributed April 19-25 and the second program will be distributed May 3-9. Again, these can be accessed via a private link. PBT's Open Air series in May will also be a subscriber benefit including VIP seating.

Adjournment -

There being no further business, Kathleen Miclot made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Submitted by, Harris Ferris

Approved by, Betsy Teti