

CLEVELAND BALLET

REFLECTING ON THE YEAR SO FAR: Q&A WITH PRESIDENT & CEO LARRY GOODMAN



YOU BECAME PRESIDENT & CEO AT THE START OF THE YEAR. WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR PRIMARY FOCUS DURING THIS TIME AND CAN YOU GIVE SOME INSIGHT TO PLANS MOVING FORWARD?

At first, there were really two areas that demanded attention: the business model and morale. Financially, there were some obvious changes that needed to be made in the operational footprint (reducing labor costs) and in operational logistics. People needed to get paid on time, etc. At the same time, morale was perilously low. Dancers and staff had not been well taken care of and they all needed to know that we care about them and are dedicated to their well-being.

We made strong in-roads in both of these areas by spring - and so I could expand my focus and energy to include working on making Cleveland Ballet a mission-driven organization with a collective and strong sense of ownership.

WHAT IS GOING TO DISTINGUISH THE 2024-2025 SEASON UNDER YOUR AND TIMOUR BOURTASENKOV'S LEADERSHIP?

There is an astute saying: "No mission - no money; no money - no mission." People will support a mission-driven organization that can prove its worth to the community; and doing so requires adequate funding. In bad times, this is a "vicious cycle" - but in good times this is the formula for reaching ever higher. Do what you do really well and in an inspiring way, and the community will reward you with their support.

Timour's ability to create powerful performances that transport the audience, combined with his visionary sense of what the Company can accomplish, will drive us to be better and better this season. Our calendar has over 30 performances on it already - and that will certainly grow as the season goes on.

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WHAT IS GOING TO DISTINGUISH THE 2024-2025 SEASON UNDER YOUR AND TIMOUR BOURTASENKOV'S LEADERSHIP? (cont)

We have also very intentionally expanded our presence on the arts landscape of Northeast Ohio, collaborating with the Cleveland Pops Orchestra and "Musical Upcoming Stars in the Classics" in the fall, and then the Cleveland Museum of Art in the spring (revolving around their Picasso exhibit late December - April). And we are confident that these ambitious plans will lead to generous support from the Northeast Ohio community.

ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, HOW HAVE YOU PARLAYED YOUR EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATION TO THE ARTS?

Schools are complex organisms - with multiple constituencies and a mission that resists being measured in numbers. I was fortunate to be in executive leadership roles in schools for almost three decades - and during that time, I learned a great deal about leading complex organizations whose missions resonate passionately within the hearts of those associated with the school even while they are hard to quantify.

And so I had a strong context for understanding the challenges of running a ballet company in which the constituencies vary widely (patrons, professionals, staff, board, etc.) but are united in their passion for the art form. And the work teachers do - and heads of school therefore necessarily support - is very similar in kind to the work artists/dancers do. Both seek to inspire their audience. The Latin roots of the word translate literally as "breathe life into," the opposite of "expire." Teachers use knowledge to inspire, while artists use beauty, wonder, and talent. I feel right at home working to support efforts to inspire those around us. At Cleveland Ballet, we believe that these acts of inspiration are vital to our very humanity; we believe art feeds humanity.