

CLEVELAND BALLET

POINTE TO THE FUTURE DISCUSSION WITH LARRY GOODMAN, INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

At the end of January, *Crain's Cleveland Business* heralded, "New Cleveland Ballet leaders have the organization in turnaround mode." Two months later Larry Goodman shares an update on progress in creating and implementing a sustainable model to ensure classical ballet for Northeast Ohio audiences.

What was your first priority when you stepped in as Interim CEO?

I had been a board member for eight years and so I had a top-level understanding of Cleveland Ballet but this was no longer business as usual. My first priority was assessing our finances to get a realistic sense of where we stood, as well as evaluating operational practices in order to build a roadmap for where we needed to be. Another key priority was steering a damaged culture to one that embraced creativity, respect, openness, and positive support.

How is that going?

Because Cleveland patrons showed such support for *The Nutcracker*, the infusion of revenue allowed us to develop a realistic financial strategy that will ensure stability moving forward. Throughout the organization, we have all been working diligently to identify and implement practices and policies that align with the creative sensibility of a premier ballet company. And I think the culture is changing – you can actually feel it.

What can audiences expect from an artistic standpoint?

Looking forward to *Sleeping Beauty*, Cleveland Ballet's first performance under our new Artistic Director, Timour Bourtasenkov, we have elevated the production value technically and artistically with challenging choreography and opulent sets and costumes. More than anything, *Sleeping Beauty* will demonstrate that we have set a new standard for Cleveland Ballet moving forward.

Are there any new programs?

Yes, we have started two new initiatives – the Academy of Cleveland Ballet and Patrons Circle. Early in January we launched the new school where our current and former dancers are teaching a range of classes for young children, emerging professionals, and adults who simply want to dance. As the region's only training program operated by a professional ballet company, we are extremely proud that we can offer students the unique opportunity to perform in front of a large audiences in such productions as *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*.

I'm also looking forward to the promise of our new Patrons Circle – a group of dynamic and committed ballet supporters who will be engaging in events to support Cleveland Ballet, volunteering, and we hope, enjoying the opportunity to meet and mingle.

Where will you shift your focus now?

All of our programs – education, community impact, Pay What You Can, as well as our core focus as a world-class ballet company – rely on the financial support of our patrons. We are committed to demonstrating to our funders, whether be they individuals or institutions, that we are fiscally sound, operationally responsible, and artistically exceptional, so that we can continue earning their trust.