

Silicon Valley Ballet sets new season amid good financial news

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Following more good fundraising news, Silicon Valley Ballet is hoping to bounce back with an ambitious 2015-2016 season even as its leadership is in flux.

The season will kick off in October with Cuban dance legend Alicia Alonso's adaptation of "Giselle" (Oct. 16-18). Silicon Valley Ballet will be the first American company to present Alonso's version of the classic tragedy, and the collaboration will mark one of the first between an American performing arts company and Cuba since the 1950s.

The season will also include a revamp of Karen Gabay's version of the holiday chestnut, "The Nutcracker" (Dec. 12-27), with new sets and costumes; a program consisting of a trio of works -- Balanchine's "Who Cares," Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's "Prism" (a company premiere) and Ohad Naharin's "Minus 16" -- (Feb. 19-21, 2016); a reprise of the program titled "Bodies of Technology" featuring Amy Seiwert's "This Might be True" (March 25-27, 2016); and the West Coast premiere of Septime Webre's "ALICE (in wonderland)," drawn from the beloved kids' story (April 29-May 1, 2016). Subscriptions, ranging \$75 to \$440, are on sale. Single tickets go on sale Sept. 8. Details are available at www.balletsj.org.

"We're excited about the ballet's upcoming season," said board Chairwoman Millicent Powers, "which is a tribute to all of the great support shown by the community over the past months."

And yet the drama backstage continues, as the company, which has renamed itself Silicon Valley Ballet (from Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley) pushes toward a looming fundraising goal.

The good news is the company has raised \$2.3 million toward its \$3.5 million goal, and has pushed back the original deadline of October to May 2016, after the end of the season. Officials say they are confident of making their goal.

"Now more than ever we are quietly confident and optimistic," Powers said. "The ballet is here because of the financial investment of the many. ... We're proud to have this opportunity, and we're working hard to deliver on the opportunity ahead."

Meanwhile, the troupe is also losing CEO Alan Hine, who is moving out of the area for personal reasons, company officials said.

"Alan was a great contributor to the team and we wish him good things," Powers said.

The resilient company, which partnered with New York's American Ballet Theatre in 2012, has weathered many fiscal crises over the years.

The ballet has countered by making major cuts.

The budget for the organization, which includes 32 professional dancers and bustling school of 350 students, now stands at \$5.6 million, down from a high of \$8 million. During its most recent fundraising campaign, the ballet was able to raise \$640,000 in 10 days.

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