

# BALLET SAN JOSE

S I L I C O N V A L L E Y

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 26, 2006

### HIGH TECH AND HIGH ART MEET AT THE BALLET

It may seem a contradiction of sorts using a twentieth century tool to try to "sell" a fifteenth century art form to twenty-first century consumers, but that is just what retired technology executive David Preston is doing to increase awareness of Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley...and in the heart of the high tech world, at that.

Just two years ago, Ballet San Jose's rudimentary web site was drawing less than 400 hits a day, and most of those visitors never ventured past the home page. Today, the site gets nearly 8,500 hits each day, with an average of 6 page views per visitor and over 1,500 unique visitors each day. The company's world-wide-web audience will exceed 500,000 visitors this year. The geographic breakdown is: 85% from North America (USA & Canada), 12% from Europe, 4% from Asia, Australia & Oceania and the balance from the rest of the World.

These users are primarily interested in four areas of the site:

- Σ Information about Performances (32%),
- Σ Ticket Sales (23%),
- Σ Dancer biographies (24%) and
- Σ News & events surrounding the Ballet (15%).

The balance of the visitors use the site as a reference utility, as many of the pages link to more information about ballet instructors, choreographers, composers and other local information.

The site is a wealth of information about related matters, with pages that show views of the stage from various locations in the theatre, pages that direct theatre-goers to local restaurants, free and inexpensive parking, night life, and even other entertainment venues. In addition to facilitate the contacting of ballet staff and box office, there are places to post messages for the company... an online suggestion box, if you will.

Another popular, if less public set of pages, is the Press Room, which has postings of recent and past press releases and a "secured" photo file, where reporters and photo editors can download high-resolution press photos for use in their publications. "This has been a great addition to the site," says Ballet Marketing Director, Lee Kopp.

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"I send photos of various ballets, social events, new dancers, etc. to one person...our webmaster...and then send a notice to my press contacts with a password that they can use to download anything they want. It saves me time because I don't have to send photos to dozens of people. It does not eat up space on the email systems of my contact people. And it gives photo editors a CHOICE in what they use...instead of just using what I decide to send them. Everyone has been very happy with the Press Room concept."

Ballet Box Office Manager Gary Voss is a big fan of the site, as well. "When the phones are busy, and we don't really have time to go into detail explaining a particular show, or giving detailed directions to the theatre and such, we can direct people to the site for that information. Once they decide if they want to buy or not, they can call us back, or they can just click the 'buy' button and be directed to a secure page where they can make their ticket purchase online. Nearly 50% of our sales are now made through the internet."

Preston is not standing back and basking in the success of the site, however. "Right now I am redesigning the home page to be more intuitive. I want to keep each area of interest not more than 2 clicks away. We are also increasing the frequency and range of our online newsletter and have plans for an Online Store where visitors can purchase memorabilia, ballet logo items, school supplies for dance classes, and much more."

Ironically, Preston lives in Las Vegas, Nevada and does all of the website work remotely. "Before we retired and moved to Nevada, both my wife and I were big supporters of Ballet SJSV--she was on the Board of the Ballet, and we both were avid fans. While we still come to the Bay Area for Ballet performances, I wanted to continue to be personally involved with the organization. The website work seemed like a natural."

Ballet San Jose has just completed it's 20th Anniversary Season. The new season opens in November 2006 and runs through May 2007. For additional information about the Company and to view this ever-changing website, visit: [www.balletsanjose.org](http://www.balletsanjose.org).

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