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Ballet School Announces New Director Lise la Cour moves from Royal Danish Ballet

(San Jose, CA) Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley Artistic Director Dennis Nahat is pleased to announce the engagement of Lise la Cour, who hails from the Royal Danish Ballet in Copenhagen, as the new Director of the Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley School. "Lise brings an international professionalism to our school that maintains the high standards we expect here," stated Nahat.



Ms. la Cour is a native of Copenhagen, the mother of three grown children, two of whom dance with New York City Ballet. She trained in the Bournonville technique at the Ballet School of the Royal Danish Ballet from the age of nine. Her teachers included Erik Bruhn, Hans Brenaa, Stanley Williams and Vera Volkova. Joining the Royal Danish Ballet at eighteen she performed soloist and principal roles with such noted choreographers as Kenneth MacMillan, Jerome Robbins, George Balanchine, John Neumeier, Flemming Flindt and Roland Petit. Ms. la Cour served as Associate Ballet Director of the Royal Danish Ballet from 1988-1995. She has also worked for the Royal Danish Opera and as a freelance choreographer. Her extensive choreographic experience includes three ballets for the Royal Danish Ballet and five children's ballets based on Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales. Having worked with children since 1988, Ms. la Cour brings a world-class background and great excitement to Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley School.

Andrew Bales, BSJSV's Executive Director stated, "We are thrilled that, after 40 years in Copenhagen, this opportunity attracted Ms. la Cour. She brings a wealth of experience having worked in so many exciting aspects of the world-renowned Royal Danish Ballet's operations. We will miss our out-going School Director, Donna Delseni. Donna set a standard that demanded we find the very best to replace her."

The School's Director for the past four years, Donna Delseni is returning to Florida to pursue other interests. Ms. Delseni came to the school when it was in its second year with two studios, three instructors, and 150 students. Under Ms. Delseni's leadership BSJSV School grew to four studios, 6 regular faculty members, numerous guest instructors, and over 360 students with a lengthy waiting list. Ms. Delseni is credited with codifying the school's syllabus, increasing the Professional Division from

4 levels to 7 levels, and creating the exemplary outreach program, "The Next Step," which offers free ballet classes to students of limited financial means.

"The experiences I have had teaching in our school and for the outreach program have been wonderful," said Ms. Delseni. "Quite a number of our 'Next Step' students have continued their studies after concluding the initial eighteen weeks of training and are now full members of our school. Some are even performing in The Nutcracker. I love Orientation Day, when the girls are outfitted in our school uniform for the first time. That moment of transformation is so moving. We show them how to put their hair up in a bun. They hold themselves elegantly and observe a 'ballerina' in the mirror. They are changed at that moment. Their confidence builds; they are immersed in the music and the movement and they experience worlds that they could not imagine before, and find a power they didn't know they possessed. To me, it is a moment that defines all that is good about the art form. This school is such an important part of our community, and being an instructor here is a privilege. The greatest thing about being a teacher is the ability to show a child how much you believe in them. Ballet is what we teach, but it is also a means for empowerment, regardless of where the student's career paths lead. I know that Ms. la Cour shares my love of dance and of young people. Wonderful things are ahead for Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley School."

Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley School is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 by Dennis Nahat. It is the official school of Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley. Now in its sixth year of operation, the School has achieved National recognition as a premier ballet training institution. Boasting a distinguished faculty including former and current Company dancers and prestigious guest instructors, Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley School draws from the best of the American, Russian, French, Italian, and Danish schools of training.

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