Houston Ballet Foundation

Annual Meeting of The Board of Trustees

MINUTES

Monday, May 19th, 2025

**Call to order:** The Houston Ballet Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees was held in person on Monday, May 19th, 2025, in Houston, Texas. The meeting convened at 4:32 p.m.

**QUORUM:** Achieved

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

Mr. Nicholas Baran, Mrs. Melza Barr, Mrs. Diane Bazelides, Mr. Gary Beauchamp, Mrs. Susan Binney, Mrs. Kristy J. Bradshaw, Ms. Zoe Cadore, Mr. Michael Collins, Mrs. Molly Crownover, Mr. James Cowan, Mrs. Pamela D. Earthman, Sharon Erskine, Anne Graubart, Mrs. Jayne Johnston, Mr. Jesse H. Jones II, Natasha Khan, Mr. Edward Koehler, Mrs. Jennifer Laporte, Ms. Amy LeBlanc, Chad Libertus, Ms. Judy Liu, Mr. Daniel M. McClure, Mrs. Marth Rocks McMurray, Mrs. Andrea Medina, Ms. Beth Muecke, Mrs. Jean E. May, Ms. Nancy Powell Moore, Mrs. Amy Pincu, Mrs. Teal Tigner Reamer, Mr. Kent Schaffer, Mrs. Jordan Seff, Ms. Sunday Shepard, Ms. S. Shawn Stephens, Mrs. Allison Thacker, Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru, Mrs. Erika Toussaint, Mrs. Phoebe Tudor, Mrs. Margaret Vaughan Cox, Ms. Paula Whitten-Doolin, Mrs. Elizabeth Zdeblick

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Mrs. Linda H. Alexander, Madeline Barton, Traci Bocock, Ms. Coco Brennan, Mr. Walter Bering, Ms. Tyler Donatelli, Mrs. Jo Furr, Mr. Mitchell George, Mr. Stuart Humphries, Mrs. Jennifer Kushner, Ms. Susan E. Lehmann, Mrs. Kris McGee, Ms. Sharon Roark, Mr. Samuel Rodriguez, Mrs. Tricia Singer, Mrs. Christine Sofka, Ms. Wendy Smith

**STAFF PRESENT:** Brittany Broussard**,** Kelli Gilson, Julie Kent, Rachel Koenig, Angie Lane, Angela Lee, Jim Nelson, Jennifer Sommers, Simon Thew, Stanton Welch AM

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru welcomed everyone and called to order the Annual Meeting of the Board of Members.

With a quorum present, Mrs. Tsuru invited Mrs. Bradshaw to introduce the new Trustee candidates for the Class 2025-2028. The candidates presented included: Mrs. Kyle Baker, Mr. Walter Bering, Mr. Michael Bertuccio, Dawn Campbell, Ms. Gay Currie, Mrs. Carter Dugan Ms. Michelle Iverson Jeffery, Ms. Michelle Maresh, Mrs. Tricia Singer and Mrs. Paula Whitten-Doolin, all of which were unanimously approved.

With no objections, the meeting of the members was adjourned.

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru called to order the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 4:39 p.m. She then invited Mrs. Kristy Bradshaw to present the slate for the 2025-2026 Executive Committee Officers and Members-at-Large, all of which were unanimously approved.

Following this, Mrs. Bradshaw called for approval of the 2025-2026 slate of Executive Committee Officers and Members-at-Large, all of which were unanimously approved. Mrs. Bradshaw then thanked outgoing Executive Committee members Mrs. Kelley Lubanko, Mrs. Elizabeth Zdeblick and Ms. Leticia Loya for their service, as well as outgoing Guild representatives Ms. Michelle Jeffery – FY25 Guild President, and Leslie Alston – FY25 Guild Treasurer.

Mrs. Bradshaw thanked Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru for her first year as Houston Ballet’s Board President and expressed her excitement looking to her second year as President.

Then, Mrs. Tsuru called for a motion to approve the February 24th, 2025, Full Board Meeting minutes. With a quorum present, the minutes were approved.

Mrs. Tsuru invited the Vice President of Finance, Mrs. Amy Pincu, to present the recommended FY26 budget to the Board of Trustees. With a quorum present, the financial budget for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 was approved.

Mrs. Tsuru thanked Mrs. Pincu. Mrs. Tsuru then congratulated the Guild on the highest grossing Nutcracker Market to date and thanked them for their commitment and support of the Houston Ballet Foundation.

**SPECIAL EVENT’S REPORT**

Mrs. Tsuru congratulated the 2025 Raising the Barre Chairs Duyen and Marc Nguyen, Dr. Tatiana Sorkin and Michel Coret.

She then noted upcoming special events, including the Onstage Dinner, the 2025 Nutcracker Market, Ballet Ball, Spring Market and Raising the Barre.

Next, Mrs. Tsuru invited Mr. Jim Nelson to give the Executive Director’s report.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Nelson thanked everyone for approving the FY26 Budget. He emphasized the work Houston Ballet had been doing with the Strategic Plan and noted that Artistic would be giving an update on their portion of the Strategic Plan later in the meeting. Mr. Nelson thanked the Production and Dancer Underwriters for the 2024-25 season.

He stressed the importance of building the Houston Ballet Endowment to $200 Million by 2035. He urged those who have not yet made a provision in their estate to support Houston Ballet to consider doing so.

Mr. Nelson then reviewed the April financials.

In closing, Mr. Nelson expressed his gratitude to the Board of Trustees and recognized Jim Jordan, Phoebe Tudor, Allison Thacker, Shawn Stephens, Leigh Smith, Kristy Bradshaw and Stephanie Tsuru for the privilege of working with them as past Presidents.

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru invited Mr. Stanton Welch and Mrs. Julie Kent to give the Artistic Directors’ report.

**ARTISTIC DIRECTORS’ REPORT**

Mrs. Julie Kent, Mr. Stanton Welch and Kelli Gilson gave a report on the Artistic portion of the Strategic Plan. Those initiatives include engaging a wide spectrum of creative voices, career development for dancers, digital content creation and visibility on a global scale.

Mr. Welch then invited Roberta Guidi de Bagno to the podium to discuss the building of Raymonda ahead of the premiere on May 29. Mrs. Kent then reminded the audience of our final repertoire of the season, Sparrow, Four Last Songs and Theme and Variations.

They then announced the HBII dancers who will join the company as well as additional incoming dancers for the 2025-2026 Season.

Afterward, Mr. Welch and Mrs. Kent congratulated Mr. Claudio Munoz on 25 years with Houston Ballet. A celebration video commemorating Mr. Munoz’s work was played.

Mrs. Bradshaw noted that Houston Ballet has hired Sonja Kostich. Ms. Kostich will officially begin as Executive Director on August 4th, and on the same date, Mr. Nelson will transition to Executive Advisor and will remain with Houston Ballet through the end of December 2025.

Mrs. Bradshaw celebrated the many accomplishments of Mr. Nelson over his tenure as Executive Director of Houston Ballet. She then invited Shawn Stephens, Jay Jones, Phoebe Tudor and Stephanie Tsuru to the podium to say a few words in celebration of Mr. Nelson.

Mrs. Tsuru thanked everyone for coming and invited everyone to join her for the reception in the lobby.

**Adjournment:** With no further new or old business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:46 p.m.