

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2029

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## **WHO WE ARE**

As a performance company and dance training school, San Jose Dance Theatre's (SJDT) professional artists and students perform in venues throughout San Jose and the Bay Area. Audiences and presenters can be assured training and performances are delivered at the highest standards.

An annual season featuring two to three distinct shows are performed by the artists, with over 20,000+ people expected to see a performance each year.

As a brand, SJDT has secured a strongly managed place within the dance community. Through a branding campaign involving a modern logo, selective imagery and a diverse repertoire, SJDT has managed to portray a vibrant, youthful presence. This has attracted a younger demographic to the organization.

The culture of SJDT's participants is strictly monitored by the Artistic Director and senior artistic staff. The ethos of the organization is to provide an inclusive team environment, where everyone works together and supports one another to celebrate our differences.

## **OUR MISSION - LEADING BY EXAMPLE BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE STUDIO**

Our mission is to maintain excellence in ballet and contemporary dance training & performances and provide innovative opportunities for dancers of all levels. We seek to enrich our community through collaborations with artists and art organizations, connecting with the rich diversity that San Jose offers, in order to be the most relevant dance center in Silicon Valley. San Jose Dance Theatre knows the power of dance and seeks to harness that power into growing the arts as a whole in Silicon Valley.

## **OUR CORE VALUES - DEVELOPING A DANCER'S CORE - BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY**

SJDT's values outline a strong workforce, who act as a team to deliver high quality outcomes. Through a positive and inclusive environment, our staff understands working together is integral to the success of our programs. As a result, we are able to leverage each individual's skills to achieve our mission at a faster pace. We seek to develop all aspects of new and upcoming artists. Strong, skilled and thoughtful dancers help spread the joy of the arts throughout our community.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) STATEMENT**

SJDT is committed to cultivating an organization that is inclusive in artistic expression and embraces diversity on stage and off. SJDT seeks to build the individual and organizational capacity to enact systemic change on issues of equity and social inequality.

## **OUR PRIORITIES - WE CREATE ARTISTS THROUGH OPPORTUNITY**

SJDT is committed to being at the forefront of dance by expanding our programs and pushing the boundaries of artistic development. By developing our dancers and giving them the skills needed to complete more challenging and diverse choreography and repertoire, it enables the artistic team to develop the artistic vibrancy of the organization and cultivate young, diverse artists. The dance floor is a level playing field where everyone is given a chance to shine. SJDT is a social change agent that employs multiculturalism and intersectionality to guide our efforts, in order to combat and defeat systemic oppression. We want to build a community that puts arts and culture at the forefront to ensure the sustainable growth of the dance industry in San Jose

## **OUR TEAM - ON TIME, ON BUDGET AND ON POINTE**

San Jose Dance Theatre operates as a 501(c)(3) not for-profit organization.

The board is made up of professionals who are elected per nominated term. This structure complies with regulations surrounding nonprofit organizations.

With a diverse group of former dancers, members of the San Jose arts community and local business leaders, the SJDT board strives to provide the best overall dance experiences for both our dancers and our audiences while maintaining a strict fiscal responsibility to our investors and donors. We aim to always deliver on time training for our dancers, on budget productions for our patrons and do it all with a clear vision of our place in the community.

## **OUR HISTORY**

San Jose Dance Theatre (SJDT), founded in 1965, is a nonprofit ballet company and school dedicated to high-quality productions and training. Home to San Jose's longest-running *Nutcracker*, SJDT has provided iconic performances for over 60 years. The school, relaunched in 2014, now serves over 100 students, growing 20% annually. With a commitment to diversity, professional collaborations, and strong community partnerships, SJDT aims to become San Jose's premier classical and contemporary dance company.



## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S VISION

San Jose Dance Theatre is entering an exciting new chapter under the leadership of Artistic Director **Nicole Haskins**, whose vision is rooted in excellence, innovation, and the holistic development of dancers. With an impressive career as a professional dancer, renowned choreographer, and dedicated mentor, Nicole brings a fresh perspective to SJDT—one that emphasizes not only technical mastery but also artistic exploration, personal growth, and mental well-being.

Nicole's philosophy is centered on nurturing "**the whole dancer**," ensuring that students develop the resilience, confidence, and adaptability needed for a career in dance and beyond. Her approach extends beyond the ballet barre, focusing on fostering a supportive and empowering environment where dancers are encouraged to take creative risks, embrace challenges, and deepen their passion for the art form.

A highly respected figure in the ballet world, Nicole has been recognized for her visionary choreography and dedication to training the next generation of dancers. She was highly recommended by esteemed mentors, faculty, and founders of The Ballet Alliance and has mentored many young artists. Her leadership will guide SJDT to new artistic heights while strengthening its role in the broader dance community.

Nicole's extensive experience developing professional training programs has led to the success of many dancers who have gone on to earn professional contracts with companies across the country. She is committed to ensuring that SJDT students are prepared for the evolving landscape of the dance world—whether their paths lead to professional companies, collegiate programs, or other creative endeavors.

Beyond technical excellence, Nicole values the power of dance to build community and create meaningful connections. She believes in fostering an environment where dancers feel seen, supported, and inspired to reach their fullest potential. Under her direction, SJDT will continue to be a place where artistry flourishes, traditions are honored, and new creative possibilities emerge.

With a deep respect for SJDT's legacy and an unwavering commitment to its future, Nicole is poised to lead the organization into a dynamic and thriving new era.

## OBJECTIVES

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- I. Growth and development of the school
  - A. Reach a greater audience base to attract new students
  - A. Expand our scholarship program
  - A. Build and develop our Artistic Staff
2. Bring top level productions to the community
  - A. Continue to build exciting productions that are approachable to a wider audience
  - B. Expand collaborations with other San Jose arts organizations
- A. Expand our outreach programs

# San Jose Dance Theatre: Strategic Vision & Goals (2025-2027)

Under the leadership of **Artistic Director Nicole Haskins**, San Jose Dance Theatre is poised for a transformative period of artistic growth, community engagement, and educational excellence. Over the next two years, SJDT will focus on the following strategic priorities:

## **I. Strengthening *The Nutcracker* as a Community Staple**

SJDT's annual production of *The Nutcracker* has been a beloved holiday tradition in San Jose for nearly six decades. Our goal is to **expand and enrich the audience experience**, ensuring it remains a cherished cultural event for families while attracting new patrons. By refining production quality, enhancing outreach efforts, and deepening community partnerships, we aim to solidify *The Nutcracker* as a must-see holiday event for the region.

## **2. Presenting New & Exciting Ballets That Resonate with Audiences**

We are committed to presenting **innovative and relevant ballet productions** that captivate both dedicated ballet enthusiasts and new audiences. By selecting works that explore compelling themes and contemporary issues, SJDT will **keep ballet fresh and alive**, ensuring its relevance in today's evolving arts landscape. These productions will introduce diverse stories, dynamic choreography, and collaborations with local artists to engage a broader audience.

## **3. Inspiring & Elevating Young Dancers Through Art & Opportunity**

At the heart of SJDT's mission is the development of young artists. Over the next two years, we will provide **expanded performance opportunities, masterclasses, and mentorship programs** to inspire and train the next generation of dancers. By connecting students with industry professionals and fostering a culture of artistic excellence, we will equip them with the skills and confidence to succeed in dance and beyond.

#### **4. Keeping Ballet Fresh & Thriving in a Changing Cultural Landscape**

In a time when fine arts are increasingly underfunded and underappreciated, SJDT is committed to advocating for the importance of ballet. Through **community engagement, educational programming, and collaborative partnerships**, we will work to **increase awareness and appreciation of dance as an essential cultural and educational resource**. By making ballet accessible and engaging, we will ensure its continued vitality for future generations.

#### **5. Contributing to San Jose's Economic & Cultural Growth**

A thriving arts organization enriches its community. SJDT will continue to **serve as an economic and cultural asset to San Jose** by offering high-quality performances, educational programs, and outreach initiatives that foster a deeper appreciation for the arts. **By strengthening our ballet school and professional productions, we will contribute to the prosperity of our city while providing enriching artistic experiences for all.**

#### **6. Reestablishing SJDT as the Premier Ballet School & Company**

Our ultimate vision is to **restore SJDT's standing as the leading ballet academy and performance company in the region**. This will be achieved by elevating training standards, attracting top-tier faculty, and fostering an environment where students and professionals can thrive. By nurturing excellence at every level—from our youth program to our professional performances—SJDT will reclaim its status as a **pillar of ballet excellence in the Bay Area**.

#### **Moving Forward**

With these goals in place, **San Jose Dance Theatre is ready to enter a bold new era**, one that honors our rich history while embracing a future of artistic innovation, community impact, and educational excellence.

Through strategic planning, strong leadership, and the collective passion of our dancers, families, and supporters, we are excited to **build a brighter future for ballet in San Jose**.