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## **Segerstrom Center for the Arts Names Susan Brooker**



### **Artistic Director of the American Ballet Theatre William J. Gillespie School**

**COSTA MESA, CA** | Segerstrom Center for the Arts is delighted to announce Susan Brooker has been appointed as the Artistic Director of the American Ballet Theatre William J. Gillespie School, effective August 1, 2023. In her new role at the ABT Gillespie School, Susan will oversee all levels of the ABT Gillespie Children's Division (Pre-Primary to Level 3) and Pre-Professional Division (Level 4 and above), as well as the OC Young Dancer Summer Workshop, master class series, and summer dance programs at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. She will be integral in providing an innovative artistic vision for the school and serving as a leader for all part-time and full-time staff.

Brooker comes to the Center as a seasoned ballet aficionado who has made her mark all over the world. She graduated from the **London College of Drama and Dance**, specializing in Cecchetti Ballet. From there, she worked alongside several dance companies, serving as

Co-Director of **The Hamlyn School of Dance De Vita – Lukens** in Florence, Italy; Director for **The School of Dance Connecticut** in Hartford, Connecticut; Director for the **BalletMet Dance Academy** in Columbus, Ohio; and Director for the **UNCSA School of Dance**, ABT's Exclusive Educational Affiliate School, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

"Brooker's level of ballet knowledge is absolutely remarkable," said **Casey Reitz, President of Segerstrom Center for the Arts**. "Her passion, commitment, and vision to move forward and grow the ABT Gillespie School and its mission are exciting for the future of so many Orange County dancers. Her expertise and innate enthusiasm will positively impact everyone involved with the school. I could not be more honored to welcome her to our Center and I look forward to working with her."

Alongside her impeccable leadership experience, Brooker has a longstanding relationship with American Ballet Theatre, the official Dance Company for Segerstrom Center for the Arts. For the past 15 years, Brooker has served as an Artistic Advisor, Teacher, and Examiner for the American Ballet Theatre's National Training Curriculum. Brooker is well adored in the American Ballet Theatre community.

"As the new Artistic Director of the ABT Gillespie School, Susan comes to the position as an established and successful administrative and creative leader, well-versed in ABT's National Training Curriculum. We are fortunate to have her on board and working with us, and I look forward to meaningful collaboration and alignment between the ABT Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School and the ABT Gillespie School in the coming years" said **Susan Jaffe, Artistic Director of American Ballet Theatre**.

Segerstrom Center for the Arts announced its partnership with American Ballet Theatre as its official Dance Company for the Center in September of 2021, and has since provided several remarkable World and West Coast Premieres and engagements. This partnership has allowed the talented students at the ABT Gillespie School priority audition opportunities for engagements. Brooker's familiarity with American Ballet Theatre will help to align the ABT Gillespie School's policies and training with the overarching principles and repertoire of the American Ballet Theatre Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School giving students the opportunity to perform at their maximum potential.

"I am thrilled that Susan Brooker will lead ABT Gillespie School's artistic initiatives and endeavors" said **Judy Morr, Executive Vice President**. "She is a wonderful artist and a strong leader whom I know will continue to uphold the school's artistry and excellence."

Brooker's role at Segerstrom Center for the Arts will be pivotal in elevating ABT Gillespie School curricula and practice by providing the young dancers of Orange County with opportunities to flourish and develop in their professional field of dance.

“I am excited and inspired by the prospect of working with the ABT Gillespie School faculty and students,” said Brooker. “Dance education is my passion, and it is a privilege to be able to work in a School where artistic excellence is paramount.”

### **Biography**

*F.I.S.T.D. Enrico Cecchetti Dip.*

*ABT National Training Curriculum, Cecchetti Syllabus*

*Ballet, Pointe, Repertoire, Ballet Pedagogy, Music in the Ballet Studio*

Susan Brooker is a member of the ABT’s National Training Curriculum Artistic Board of Examiners and Instructors for the American Ballet Theatre, National Training Curriculum, and guest teacher in the ABT Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School.

In 2000 Ms. Brooker was invited to the USA to teach on the faculty of the Hartt School Dance Division, University of Hartford, Connecticut, USA, she became Director of the School of Dance Connecticut in 2001 and Chair of the Dance Department of the Hartt School Community Division in 2004. From 2008 – 2014 she was Director of the BalletMet Dance Academy, Columbus OH.

Ms. Brooker is a Fellow, a Major Examiner of the I.S.T.D., and holds the Enrico Cecchetti Diploma. She taught for many years in Italy as: Director of the Scuola di Danza Hamlyn di De Vita, Lukens, Florence, Italian Examinations Organizer for the I.S.T.D., Honorary President of the Cultural Association, Ateneo Danza, Forli, and Vice President of Danzare Cecchetti, A.N.C.E.C. of which she is still Italian delegate for Cecchetti International Classical Ballet. Ms. Brooker is one of the Festival Artistic Directors for The Ballet Alliance.

Students of Ms. Brooker have won prestigious international dance competitions including the Prix de Lausanne and are dancing with companies in Europe, South America and the United States.

Ms. Brooker has taught in schools in the USA, Europe, Canada, and Japan and is a specialist in Ballet Pedagogy and curriculum development.

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**Segerstrom Center for the Arts** is an innovative, nonprofit arts organization committed to supporting artistic excellence, creating impactful educational programs, and dedicated to engaging a culturally connected, inclusive and vital Orange County community for all, through the power of live performance.

As the leading cultural arts hub, the Center presents a variety of programming with performances by international dance companies, Broadway national tours, jazz and cabaret musicians, chamber orchestras and ensembles, comedy, and speaker series. Through the Education and Community Engagement departments, the Center also delivers family-friendly programming and performances on the Julianne and George Argyros Plaza; these events include outdoor movie screenings, concerts, dance classes, diverse festivals and more.

With six venues on a beautiful multi-disciplinary campus, Segerstrom Center for the Arts proudly serves as the artistic home to three of the region's major performing arts organizations: **Pacific Symphony**, **Philharmonic Society of Orange County** and **Pacific Chorale** as well as two independently acclaimed organizations: Tony Award®-winning **South Coast Repertory** and the **Orange County Museum of Art**. Segerstrom Center is also home to the American Ballet Theatre William J. Gillespie School and Studio D, Arts School for All Abilities.

Segerstrom Center for the Arts applauds its corporate partner Kaiser Permanente, Official Health Care Partner.

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