As you learn dance, the key is to grow. You must be nice to yourself to fulfill your potential. Do not mean, and you must actually dance. Dance is everything I do and what we say that we believe in. It is everything I do authentically. Dance is the embodiment of social change, music and work always continues.

Matt Carney, executive director who led San Diego Ballet through the pandemic, is excited to get back to in-person events.

Matt Carney, a longtime dancer and arts administrator, moved to San Diego from Minneapolis in 2008 for his first professional job at Malashock Dance. Soon after, he was also performing with the other dance companies in Liberty Station’s Del Mar Dance Place building and San Diego Dance Theater and Joan San Francisco San Diego Dance Theater.

Eventually, Carney also started teaching on the administrative side of dance, where he discovered a passion for arts engagement and advocacy. As the leading voice of intersecting artistic excellence and the trio of works from its celebrated repertoire: Amor, Ritmos Latinos, and Giselle, a ballet set to mariachi music, “Ritmos Latinos,” a show that encapsulated Latin music. The show features “La Bamba” and “Que Bonito Dia” among others. The show is about the partnership of Latin music with the visual arts, and “Ritmos Latinos” is about those moments with gorgeous staging and a show that is accessible. With San Diego Ballet, you don’t just see the dance, you feel it. You make friends and support local artists.

One of the things that I love about dance is that it is a form of communication that transcends language. When you are dancing, you are speaking to each other without words. You are connecting on a deeper level. The dance is the medium, and the body is the canvas.

When did you realize that you wanted to pursue a career as a dancer? I think the moment that I knew I wanted to pursue a career in dance was when I was 12 years old. I was watching a performance of “The Nutcracker” and was completely captivated. I knew then and there that I wanted to be a dancer. From that moment on, I made the decision to pursue a career in dance. I started taking classes and auditioning for dance companies, and eventually landed a spot at the San Francisco Ballet Academy. After attending summer intensives and winning scholarships, I was able to attend the San Francisco Ballet School and then go on to dance with the company as a corps member. From there, I went on to dance with other professional companies around the country, including the Joffrey Ballet and Ballet West. I have been fortunate enough to perform in many of the greatest ballets, including “Swan Lake,” “Giselle,” and “Coppelia.”

When did you realize that you wanted to pursue a career as an arts administrator? After many years of dancing professionally, I realized that I was still passionate about dance, but I also wanted to make a difference in the arts world. I had always been drawn to the business side of things, and I knew I could use my skills and expertise to help support and grow the arts community.

When did you realize that you wanted to pursue a career as an executive director? After many years of working in the arts administration world, I realized that I wanted to take on a leadership role. I had always been interested in the business side of things, and I knew I could use my skills and expertise to help support and grow the arts community.

What is the best part of being the leader of San Diego Ballet? The best part of being the leader of San Diego Ballet is being able to work with such talented artists and to be able to bring their expertise and creativity to the stage. I am always looking for ways to expand our reach and to bring more people into the world of dance. I am always looking for ways to bring new audiences to the ballet and to inspire them with the beauty of the art form.

What is the most challenging part of being the leader of San Diego Ballet? The most challenging part of being the leader of San Diego Ballet is the financial aspect of running a dance company. We rely on ticket sales and donations to fund our operations, and it can be difficult to attract a sufficient number of donors. We have also faced challenges due to the pandemic, which has impacted our ability to perform and to bring in revenue. However, we are committed to finding ways to overcome these challenges and to continue to bring the art of ballet to our community.

What is the role of San Diego Ballet in the community? San Diego Ballet is an integral part of the cultural life of San Diego. We perform at the Copley Symphony Hall and throughout the region, and we also offer programs and initiatives to connect with our community. We believe in the power of dance to bring people together, to inspire and to heal. We are committed to making dance accessible to everyone, regardless of their background or economic status.

What are your goals for San Diego Ballet in the future? Our goals for San Diego Ballet in the future include expanding our audience and bringing the art of ballet to more people. We also aim to continue to provide high-quality performance opportunities for our dancers and to support the development of new talent in the region. We are committed to fostering a culture of inclusivity and diversity, and we are always looking for ways to connect with our community and to bring dance to new audiences.

Matt Carney, executive director of San Diego Ballet.