



A Colorado RODEO



A new ballet with the Chamber Orchestra of the Springs

Thursday | May 21, 2026 | 7pm



Featuring the 1942 Original Music of Aaron Copland's **"Rodeo"**

Also A performance of Copland's **'Appalachian Spring'**
by Colorado Ballet Society's Connexus Dance Collective



Come enjoy this family entertainment!

A Love of Music Brings a New Ballet to the West

The time was 1942. John "Zoli" Varady was seven, growing up in Lakewood, Ohio, near Cleveland. World War II was consuming Americans' attention.

But at the same time, a renowned American composer and conductor, Aaron Copland, and a renowned ballet dancer and choreographer, Agnes de Mille, teamed up to produce a new ballet about the American West.

They called it "Rodeo" — pronounced then as Roe-DAY-o.

It was a sensational success. De Mille, who danced the leading role of the "Cowgirl," received 22 curtain calls and standing ovations in the prestigious Metropolitan Opera House in New York City. Critics called De Mille's ballet and Copland's music "a celebration of optimism, pluck and the spirit of the American character."



The late John "Zoli" Varady loved Copland's music.

West and the sky. When Varady was in high school, he built his own telescope and dreamed about life's possibilities.

When Varady came of age, he headed west — first to California where he earned a bachelor's degree at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. He earned a master's at the University of Washington, then earned his Ph.D. at UCLA, where he became a doctor of biostatistics.

Varady became one of the country's eminent biostatisticians. He designed the research, clinical trials and analysis programs for pharmaceutical companies' new medications. He led teams of 20 researchers.

One of his signature achievements was shepherding Naproxen through the process all the way to FDA approval and into the marketplace. Today, it's known as Aleve.

LOVE OF COPLAND'S 'RODEO'

Varady was a biostatistician his entire professional life. And through all that time, he and his wife, Ann, also were devoted aficionados of opera and classical music. They had season tickets to the San Francisco Opera. He made it a requirement for his two daughters to play an instrument — Susan, the clarinet and cello; Halsey, the violin and viola.

But even with his interests in Beethoven and Mozart, Varady always came back to his love for Copland's "Rodeo" and "Appalachian Spring."

As Varady saw his granddaughter Jessi's interest in ballet grow, a wish came to mind. Varady mused at the idea of Jessi's ballet school, Colorado Ballet Society, dancing a few movements to Copland's "Rodeo."

Roche remembers the phone conversation with her father in June 2024. "Do you think that would even be something possible?" Varady asked his daughter.

"He wanted to help support his granddaughter and

Jessi's school," Roche remembers.

Roche broached the idea to Colorado Ballet Society owner and Artistic Director Kate Walsh: "My father asked if this was something that you'd be interested in."

Two days later, Walsh responded with a bigger idea: Creating, choreographing and premiering a new ballet to a live performance of Copland's "Rodeo" score. Walsh outlined the extensive scope of such a production — developing a new story line and choreography; commissioning the Colorado Springs Chamber Orchestra; renting the Pikes Peak Center; designing all-new Western costumes and stage backdrops.



"Rodeo" Composer Aaron Copland

CREATE A LEGACY

"Commissioning a new ballet is a dream, and we would love to make this dream happen for your father," Walsh said in an email to Roche.

Roche shared Walsh's vision with her father. "He is incredibly moved by (your) ideas," Roche told Walsh. "He wants to create a legacy."

Roche said her father liked the production being in Colorado Springs. "Colorado really captures that element of ranch life, that time in U.S. history and the centennial state," Roche said.

The more Varady, his daughter and Walsh talked, the greater the vision became. Roche: "I even said, 'You know, I think this is going to be great enough that it could even be a recurring thing, not necessarily every year, but it could be something that is performed more than once.'

There was just one downside to the idea. Says Roche: "My father told me very clearly — 'I will not live to see this. I still want this to happen.'"

Varady died at age 89 in late 2024 at his home in California.

"He was just so so thrilled," Roche says, "at the idea of bringing this, with the music, and in a sense modernizing it, but also tying it to the past — bringing it to newer generations of people who might not know Copland's music."

Editor's note: In September 2025, Roche, her daughter Jessi, son, Ian, and husband, Retired Air Force Lt. Col. John Roche moved to Charlottesville, Va. They and Varady's 84-year-old widow, Ann, are attending the premiere performance of "A Colorado Rodeo," and Jessi Roche will be performing in the ballet.



Colorado Ballet Society Artistic Director Kate Walsh

A Colorado RODEO



A story of dreams, love and Western tradition

It is 1949. The Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo is returning to the Broadmoor Polo Grounds in Colorado Springs, thanks to entrepreneur and philanthropist, Spencer Penrose.

A young girl of the West, Jessi, has been waiting all year to see the Rodeo Parade come through town. Her dream is to become the Rodeo Queen, showcasing her skills as a successful cowgirl and representing the Western values of community, country, faith and family.

Jessi catches the attention of a young cowboy, Champ. He is smitten. But Jessi's competition, Prairie Rose, and her friends embarrass Jessi in front of the rodeo crowd.

Champ comes to the rescue. He swoons over Jessi and asks her to the Chuckwagon dinner.

On the day of the rodeo, they perform their best. Jessi fulfills her dream and is crowned Rodeo Queen, and Champ wins the coveted Spencer Penrose Belt Buckle.

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SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

A Colorado RODEO

& "Appalachian Spring"

Gold sponsor \$2500

- 8 tickets (\$392 value); preferred performance reserved seating.
- Full-page, color ad (5"x 8") in the program.
- Recognition in the program, email newsletters and Colorado Ballet Society website.
- Three dedicated email blasts to the 4,000 Colorado Ballet Society families and contacts, promoting your business or organization.
- Three Colorado Ballet Society social media posts
- Sponsor table display in Colorado Ballet Society's lobby leading up to the performance.
- Recognition as a sponsor in Colorado Ballet Society's lobby TVs, leading up to the performance, and on a poster in the Pikes Peak Center Lobby during the performance.
- Recognition as a sponsor from the stage prior to the performance.
- Sponsor table display in the Pikes Peak Center Lobby.



Silver sponsor \$1500

- 6 tickets (\$294 value); preferred performance reserved seating.
- Full-page, color ad (5"x 8") in the program.
- Recognition in the program, email newsletters and Colorado Ballet Society website.
- Two dedicated email blasts to the 4,000 Colorado Ballet Society families and contacts, promoting your business or organization.
- Two Colorado Ballet Society social media posts.
- Recognition as a sponsor on Colorado Ballet Society's lobby TVs, leading up to the performance, and on a poster in the Pikes Peak Center Lobby during the performances.
- Recognition as a sponsor from the stage prior to the performance.

Bronze sponsor \$500

- 4 tickets (\$196 value); preferred performance reserved seating.
- Half-page, color ad (5" w x 4" h) in the program.
- Recognition in the program, email newsletters, and Colorado Ballet Society website.
- One dedicated email blast to the 4,000 Colorado Ballet Society families and contracts, promoting your business or organization.



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COLORADO
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Kate Walsh

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / CO-OWNER

Kate Walsh danced with The Sarasota Ballet for 19 seasons and held the titles of Principal dancer and Assistant Ballet Mistress.

Ms. Walsh has performed lead and featured roles in ballets choreographed by Sir Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, Antony Tudor, Paul Taylor, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Hans Van Manen, Christopher Wheeldon, Twyla Tharp, Matthew Bourne, Jerome Robbins and Martha Graham. Roles were created on her by Matthew Hart, Will Tuckett, Dominic Walsh and Ricardo Graziano.

Ms. Walsh also guest performed in Alessandra Ferri: Art of the Pas de Deux in a gala with international ballet stars at Michigan Opera Theatre. She was a guest artist as the Sugar Plum Fairy in Colorado Ballet Society's "A Colorado Nutcracker" in 2017 and 2018.

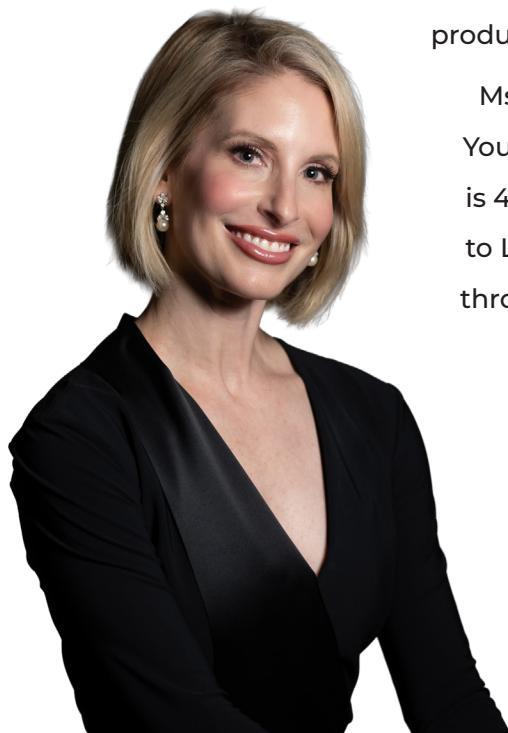
Ms. Walsh has toured to The Kennedy Center with The Sarasota Ballet and The City Center and The Joyce Theatre in New York City. Ms. Walsh was an instructor with the Sarasota Ballet School and Dance: The Next Generation, for 12 years.

She specializes in ballet technique, pointe, variations, Classical Spanish Dance, and coaching for competition.

Ms. Walsh choreographed for The Sarasota Ballet and has choreographed for the Sarasota Ballet School summer workshops and end-of-the-year performances, including co-directing and producing full-length productions.

Ms. Walsh has coached multiple award-winning students for Youth America Grand Prix, and Universal Ballet Competition. She is 4Pointe Certified; an ABT® Certified teacher from PrePrimary to Level 3; and a Mental Wellness Certified Dance Educator through Danscend.

Ms. Walsh also completed training in Dance for Parkinson's Disease, is certified in Progressing Ballet Technique and has completed the Ballet West Curriculum Design Seminar.



A Colorado RODEO & *"Appalachian Spring"*