

About Robert Smelick, Founder of Ballet Sun Valley

Robert Smelick, a long-time second homeowner in Sun Valley, organized the predecessor of Ballet Sun Valley in 2011 for the purpose of bringing the San Francisco Ballet to the Sun Valley Pavilion. Having served on the Board of SF Ballet and toured with the company to a performance in an open-air venue in Paris, he believed that the recently completed Sun Valley Pavilion would be perfect for the ballet art form. He persuaded the Sun Valley Resort to give him a date for a performance in 2012 and San Francisco Ballet performed to a sold-out audience. Smelick then brought an independent dancer Festival, curated by American Ballet Theatre principal dancer Isabella Boylston, to the Pavilion for two Festivals in 2017 and 2018.

San Francisco Ballet returned to the Pavilion in 2019 with thirty-eight dancers and two performances that brought programming to the Sun Valley area that one would expect to only see in a performing arts center in a major metropolitan area. During this 2019 Festival, Ballet Sun Valley also organized a three-day Intensive Education Program, taught by professional faculty from the highly acclaimed San Francisco Ballet School, for young aspiring dancers from across the country. Ballet Sun Valley also organized, in partnership with Boston Ballet School, an Adaptive Dance Program for differently-abled youth. This program also offered two days of training for future Adaptive Dance instructors. All of these programs are free of charges to participants.

Mr. Smelick received his BA degree from Stanford University and his MBA from Harvard University, after which he had a long career in Investment Banking and Venture Investing. He currently teaches at the Darden Graduate School of Business, University of Virginia.