

PRINCETON YOUTH BALLET

*The* Nutcracker



# OUR MISSION

## INTEGRITY AND INCLUSION

Our mission is to give talented young dancers the opportunity to perform in professional-level productions, and to invite the community to fall in love with classical ballet through our inspired storytelling, magical productions, and uncompromising artistry.

The core principles of our organization are integrity and inclusion. We are passionate about creating arts experiences that engage our entire community.

Princeton Youth Ballet is a not-for-profit corporation (501(c)(3)) founded in 2005. Co-founders Susan Jaffe and Risa Kaplowitz share a wealth of performance, teaching, and outreach experience between them; both women are gifted educators and superb artists with respected positions in the organization of the renowned American Ballet Theatre. For almost two decades, PYB has provided hundreds of young dancers with the opportunity to perform in beautiful, enriching, and visually-impactful productions, allowing them to gain both meaningful experiences in dance and valuable skills for life.

Learn more at

[princetonyouthballet.org](http://princetonyouthballet.org)

# ALUMNI

WHERE THEY ARE NOW

Princeton Youth Ballet alumni are taking great strides. Our dancers have gone on to careers with the following professional companies, on Broadway or in film/television, or are pursuing higher education at the following schools.

Starz TV Series "Flesh and Bone" (Lead)

Alonzo King LINES Ballet

American Ballet Theatre

Atlanta Ballet

Ballet Austin

Ballet Magnificat!

BalletMet

BalletFleming

BalletX

Ballet Inc.

Cirque du Soleil

Colorado Ballet

Complexions Contemporary Ballet

Dresden Semperoper Ballet

Houston Ballet

Labayen Dance/SF

Magnum Opus Ballet

Nevada Ballet Theatre

North Carolina Dance Theater

Orlando Ballet

Pacific Northwest Ballet

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre

Princess Cruises

Royal Danish Ballet

The Royal Ballet

San Francisco Ballet

"So You Think You Can Dance"

"Trip of Love" (Off Broadway)

Washington Ballet

10 Hairy Legs

Alvin Ailey/Fordham University

Barnard College

Butler Dance Program, Butler University

College of Fine Arts, The University of Utah

Dept. of Performing Arts, Elon University

Dance Department, Goucher College

Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University

Ballet Program, Mercyhurst University

Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University

Dept. of Dance, Ohio State University

Ann Lacy School of Dance & Entertainment

Oklahoma City University

Princeton University

Conservatory of Dance, SUNY Purchase

Dept. of Dance, Texas Christian University

Tisch School of the Arts, New York University

School of Dance, University of Arizona

The School of Theatre and Dance

University of South Florida

Alumni Jorina Kardhashi (Princeton University Alumna)  
and Max Azaro (Ballet Austin)



**PRINCETON YOUTH BALLET**

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# The Nutcracker

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Choreography by **Risa Kaplowitz**

Additional Choreography and Staging by  
**Talin Kenar**

Music by **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

**December 7th and 8th, 2024**

**Princeton High School Performing Arts Center**



# The Nutcracker

## PROGRAM NOTES

### ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (7 May 1840 – 6 November 1893) was a Russian composer of the Romantic era. His compositions provide the score to three of the most iconic full-length ballets in the classical repertory: *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker* and *The Sleeping Beauty*.



*Pyotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky*  
(7 May 1840 – 6 November 1893)

### ABOUT THE BALLET

*The Nutcracker* was first presented in 1892 at Moscow's Imperial Theatre one week before Christmas. The choreography by Lev Ivanov (after Marius Petipa), and the original scenario by Ivan Vsevolozhsky, was conceived after a version of the story by Alexandre Dumas, *Histoire d'un Casse-Noisette*, which itself was an adaptation of an earlier tale by E.T.A. Hoffman entitled *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*. The music was originally a selection of Tchaikovsky's eight favorite numbers from a larger composition. The collection of those eight pieces, now known as *The Nutcracker Suite*, became immediately popular.

The complete musical score, which accompanies most present-day productions of the ballet, is written for more than thirty instruments. Together they render the now iconic splendor of one of Tchaikovsky's most beloved compositions. Each company's version of the ballet features the work of its own choreographer, but the music provides a consistent foundation for this beloved holiday classic.

# The Nutcracker

## PROLOGUE

It is Christmas Eve in Nuremberg, Germany and Herr Drosselmeyer, a magician and toy-maker, is on his way to the Silberhaus family's annual holiday gathering. He is looking forward to meeting his nephew, Nathaniel, in the town square. Together, they will attend the festivities.

Drosselmeyer and his beloved pet, Owl, await Nathaniel's arrival. Suddenly, a little mouse scurries across their path. Owl looks to Drosselmeyer for permission to hunt the little mouse. Drosselmeyer obliges. Nathaniel arrives, and as Drosselmeyer takes his nephew's hand, a whisper of magic fills the air.

Just then, a menacing Mouse Queen charges onto the scene enraged by the attack on her young son. In a fit of anger, she lunges forward to cast a vengeful spell upon Nathaniel. Nathaniel falls. The Mouse Queen advances, but Drosselmeyer intercepts her. The Mouse Queen retreats, angry and determined. She plots to return at midnight accompanied by her minions. Drosselmeyer, sure of the Mouse Queen's plot, has an idea.

He casts a temporary spell of protection, and with midnight looming and a series of enchantments swirling about in his head, he continues on to the party.

Meanwhile, in the Silberhaus' family home, Marie is delightedly preparing for the evening's festivities. She looks at her reflection in the mirror and feels quite grown up in her holiday dress. Nanny arrives with a choice of ribbons for Marie's hair.



# The Nutcracker

## ACT I: PARTY SCENE AND BATTLE SCENE

Marie's little sister, Louisa, follows, hoping one of the ribbons will become hers to wear. Soon Marie's rambunctious little brother, Fritz, gallops into the room with a mischievous glint in his eye. Nanny is flustered by the children's boisterous play—the party is about to begin!

Judge and Mrs. Silberhaus are admiring their beautiful Christmas tree as the children enter the parlor. The guests arrive and the family greets them. Mother calls Nanny to bring in the Christmas cake, which is beautifully festooned with red and white stripes. Fritz follows ready to play a mischievous prank on Nanny. Suddenly, another whisper of magic fills the air and the angel atop the Christmas tree begins to shimmer. The Mouse Queen appears and Marie is visited by a Guardian Angel. Marie is bewildered by the vision. Did she imagine it? Drosselmeyer gathers the children into a circle and presents his magical dancing dolls. Nathaniel enacts a dance as a soldier in battle. The life-sized dolls—a Prince, a Princess, and three Toy Soldier Dolls—perform dances for the children.

The party continues. The children receive gifts of play swords, dolls, and teddy bears, all except Marie. Has Mother forgotten her gift? Herr Drosselmeyer intercedes to present Marie with a special nutcracker doll. Marie is charmed by its peculiar features and happily dances holding the doll in her arms. The girls dance a lullaby, the fathers dance with their daughters, the group poses for a portrait, and after much merriment, the party comes to an end. Nanny hurries the children off to bed and the guests depart. Judge and Mrs. Silberhaus retire for the evening. The nutcracker doll stands alone in the dimming light under the Christmas tree.

Drosselmeyer appears, awaiting the stroke of midnight. Just then, Marie dashes into the parlor in search of her nutcracker doll. To her startled amazement, the owl on the clock comes to life and swoops across the room to alight beside her. Soon, a family of Mice emerge, scurrying in as the clock strikes midnight.

# The Nutcracker

## ACT I: FOREST OF THE SUGAR CRYSTALS

Marie retreats to the chaise. The mice surround her and she falls to her knees clutching the nutcracker doll to her chest. Drosselmeyer sweeps in and with a snap of his cape, the Mice disperse. As Drosselmeyer summons the full force of his magic, the evening's enchantment becomes larger than life.

The Christmas tree grows to towering heights and a battalion of Soldiers appears. A harrowing battle ensues between the Mouse Queen and her minions and the now giant Nutcracker and his Soldiers. Just as the Mouse Queen is about to slay the Nutcracker with her sword, Marie hits her on the head with her shoe. The Mouse Queen falls to the ground and is dragged away by her minions.

The Nutcracker lies prone and seemingly lifeless. Marie collapses to her knees by his side, confused and heartbroken. As Drosselmeyer appears, his magic surrounds them and the Nutcracker is transformed into a handsome prince.

Marie and the Nutcracker Prince discover themselves in what appears to be a snowy forest, but the snow isn't snow at all! The Queen of the Sugar Crystals appears to greet them. A magical flurry of Sugar Crystals surrounds them and the glistening wonderland is brought to life. Marie and the Nutcracker Prince dance. A castle, nestled in the Land of Sweets, appears in the distance.



# The Nutcracker

## ACT II: LAND OF THE SWEETS

The Guardian Angel arrives in the Land of the Sweets with news for the Sugar Plum Princess, whose brother, the Nutcracker Prince, is expected to return to the castle. The Angel explains that he will be arriving with a courageous young woman who heroically saved his life. The Sugar Plum Princess performs a joyful dance and summons all the Sweets to prepare a festive welcome. When the Nutcracker Prince, Marie, and Drosselmeyer arrive, they recount the story of Marie's bravery. The Sugar Plum Princess thanks Marie with a beautiful tiara and crowns her a princess of the land. Everyone dances in celebration. The Sugar Plum Princess and her Cavalier perform a splendid adagio.

As the dances conclude, Marie finds herself in the center of a swirling transformation. The Sweets begin to disappear, and Marie, mystified, finds herself back in the parlor of her family home. Mrs. Silberhaus enters the parlor and notices the glint of a tiara on Marie's head.

Drosselmeyer sweeps into the room having forgotten his hat when leaving the party. As he makes his way to the door, his nephew, Nathaniel, enters the parlor with a gift for Mrs. Silberhaus. Marie captures his gaze with a sparkle of recognition. Nathaniel thanks Marie for saving his life and invites her to return with him to the Land of the Sweets. Marie agrees, and the two pass through the branches of the Christmas tree into a land where a world of magic awaits.

