

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET

PETER BOAL, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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It's the Megalodon of press releases!

(Everything you ever wanted to know about *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® ...but were afraid to ask.)

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET PRESENTS



November 29 – December 28, 2024

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
321 Mercer Street at Seattle Center
Seattle, WA 98109

Streaming Digitally December 20 – 28

SEATTLE, WA – Pacific Northwest Ballet's sparkling production of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® returns to the McCaw Hall stage for 37 public performances this holiday season. Featuring Tchaikovsky's timeless score performed by the world-famous PNB Orchestra, PNB Company dancers in show-stopping roles, bright young stars from the PNB School, unique-to-Seattle sets and costumes designed by Ian Falconer (creator of *Olivia the Pig*), and McCaw Hall's lobbies decked out with the season's best photo ops – PNB's production is the Pacific Northwest's favorite holiday tradition.

George Balanchine's The Nutcracker® runs **November 29 through December 28, 2024 at Seattle Center's McCaw Hall**. Tickets start at just \$29. (See "2024 Performance Schedule" below, for showtime details.) *The Nutcracker* will also stream digitally from December 20 through 28, for families and friends across the globe to watch from the comfort of home. Access for the digital performance is \$55. For tickets and additional information, contact the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424, online at PNB.org/Nutcracker, or in person at 301 Mercer St. (Be mindful of unauthorized online resellers: When purchasing tickets for PNB's production of *The Nutcracker*, order directly through PNB for peace of mind.)

PNB offers a **sensory-friendly matinee** of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® on Thursday, December 19 at 2pm, designed to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for people with sensory-processing challenges to enjoy the performance with family and friends. Modified lighting and sound levels, allowance of devices and fidgets, entry/exit privileges, trained staff, and designated quiet and activity areas will be offered at the performance.

PNB offers select **audio-described performances** for visually impaired and blind patrons at \$20 per ticket. Audio-described performances of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® are Sunday, December 1 at 12:30 pm, Saturday, December 7 at 7:30 pm, and during the sensory-friendly matinee on Thursday, December 19 at 2pm. To access the Audio Dance Description pricing, visit PNB.org/accessibility. PNB's Audio Dance Description program is generously underwritten by the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust and Jolene McCaw Family Foundation. Thanks also to Darkroom Ballet, Seattle Cultural Accessibility Consortium (SCAC), and PNB's I.D.E.A. Committee for support of this program.

2024 NUTCRACKER PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Times
Friday	Nov. 29	2:00 & 7:30pm
Saturday	Nov. 30	2:00 & 7:30 pm
Sunday	Dec. 1	12:30* & 5:30 pm
Friday	Dec. 6	7:30 pm
Saturday	Dec. 7	2:00 & 7:30* pm
Sunday	Dec. 8	12:30 & 5:30 pm
Wednesday	Dec. 11	7:30pm
Thursday	Dec. 12	7:30pm
Friday	Dec. 13	7:30 pm
Saturday	Dec. 14	2:00 & 7:30 pm
Sunday	Dec. 15	12:30 & 5:30 pm
Tuesday	Dec. 17	7:30 pm
Wednesday	Dec. 18	7:30 pm
Thursday	Dec. 19	2:00 pm* Sensory-Friendly Performance
Thursday	Dec. 19	7:30 pm
Friday	Dec. 20	2:00 & 7:30 pm
Saturday	Dec. 21	2:00 & 7:30 pm
Sunday	Dec. 22	12:30 & 5:30 pm
Monday	Dec. 23	2:00 & 7:30 pm
Tuesday	Dec. 24	12:30 pm
Wednesday	Dec. 25	No show, ho-ho-ho!
Thursday	Dec. 26	12:30 & 5:30 pm
Friday	Dec. 27	12:30 & 5:30 pm
Saturday	Dec. 28	12:30 & 5:30 pm

*Audio-described performances.

The show must go on: Pacific Northwest Ballet is committed to honoring its performance calendar. Performances will not be cancelled for sleet, snow, or Seattle traffic. In the unlikely event that the status of a performance does change, an announcement will be posted on PNB.org.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets to PNB's live and/or digital performances may be purchased through the PNB Box Office:

- Phone - 206.441.2424
- In Person - 301 Mercer Street at Seattle Center
- Online (24/7) - PNB.org

(Advance tickets through the PNB Box Office are strongly suggested for lowest prices and greatest availability. Tickets may also be purchased – subject to availability – 90 minutes prior to each performance at McCaw Hall.)

Tickets for the live performances of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® are \$29 - \$210. (Some prices are subject to change. Discounts available for children 14 and under. All ages require a ticket for admission, including babes-in-arms. For helpful hints and frequently asked questions about attending the ballet with children, visit PNB.org/Community/Resources/PNB-Kids.) It pays to bring a group: **Groups** of

ten or more save 20% off regular ticket prices above \$65, and waived fees: Visit PNB.org/season/group-sales for info. (Discounts not valid on lowest-priced tickets and may not be combined with other offers.)

Tickets for PNB's digital presentation of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® are \$55, and viewing access for the program is December 20 – 28.

Don't get fleeced for the holidays! Like many performing arts, PNB struggles with [ticket resellers](#). At their most mundane, third-party sites snap up less expensive tickets and sell them for a profit. At their most dastardly, they sometimes sell invalid tickets. For peace of mind and to enjoy the ballet at the best prices available, always purchase tickets directly from PNB. Suspected ticket scams should be reported to the Better Business Bureau.

Health & Safety: At this time, masks are encouraged but not required as part of the audience experience. For details and current info regarding PNB's health and safety policies, visit PNB.org/Health.

EXPERIENTIAL ADD-ONS:

Nutcracker Intermission Suites: Skip the lines and bustle of the lobby at half-time by treating your party to an enchanted intermission experience in the Nutcracker Suite. The Nutcracker Suite adds ease to a memorable trip to the ballet, with an array of snacks, confections, and beverages. Nutcracker Suites are \$45 per person (includes applicable tax and service charge); performance tickets sold separately. Subject to availability: Most Nutcracker Suites sell out in advance.

VIP Sugar Plum Boxes: For the ultimate pampering, the Sugar Plum Fairy has picked out her favorite seats in the house for up to seven guests to enjoy the show in their own personal Land of Sweets, with a host of VIP treats including two parking passes, a PNB gift basket, and a full menu of treats for both young and old, delivered directly to your private box seats. Sugar Plum Box Suites sell for \$2,500. Very limited availability.

HARK, THE HIGH SCHOOL CHOIRS SING!

The McCaw Hall lobby will be alive with the sound of music, as two-dozen choirs, quartets, and choral ensembles serenade audiences arriving for *The Nutcracker*. PNB began inviting high school, college, and community choirs in 2009, and the program has become a *Nutcracker* tradition. "The choirs create such a festive holiday atmosphere in McCaw Hall, and it's a fantastic experience for both the singers and our audiences," said Max Frauel, PNB's indefatigable Audience Experience Manager. "We look forward to welcoming them back this year!" Groups serenade audiences starting a half-hour before showtime. The line-up includes:

Saturday, Nov. 30, 7:30 pm: **Touchstone**
Sunday, Dec. 1, 12:30 pm: **Kamiak MidKnights**
Friday, Dec. 6, 7:30pm: **Edmonds-Woodway Mello-Aires**
Saturday, Dec. 7, 2:00 pm: **Stadium High School Choir**
Saturday, Dec. 7, 7:30 pm: **Liberty High School Jazz Choir**
Sunday, Dec. 8, 12:30 pm: **Aberdeen Goldenaires**
Sunday, Dec. 8, 5:30 pm: **Rogers High School Choir**
Wednesday, Dec. 11, 7:30 pm: **Washington High School Chamber Choir**
Thursday, Dec. 12, 7:30 pm: **Elysium**
Friday, Dec. 13, 7:30 pm: **Maywood Chorale**
Saturday, Dec. 14, 2:00 pm: **Tumwater High School Noteables**
Saturday, Dec. 14, 7:30 pm: **Mount Si Carolers**
Sunday, Dec. 15, 12:30 pm: **Spanaway Lake High School Music Company**
Sunday, Dec. 15, 5:30 pm: **Eastside Preparatory School Chamber Choir**
Tuesday, Dec. 17, 7:30 pm: **Northwest Chamber Chorus**
Wednesday, Dec. 18, 7:30 pm: **Ingraham High School Choirs**
Thursday, Dec. 19, 2:00 pm: **Lake Stevens High School Choir**
Thursday, Dec. 19, 7:30 pm: **Klahowya Vocal Jazz Ensemble**
Friday, Dec. 20, 2:00 pm: **Cloud Nine Singers**
Friday, Dec. 20, 7:30 pm: **Newport High School KnightSounds**

Saturday, Dec. 21, 2:00 pm: **Emerald Ridge High School Chamber Singers**
Sunday, Dec. 22, 5:30 pm: **Spectrum Choral Academy Ensemble**
Monday, Dec. 23, 7:30 pm: **Bellevue Youth Choirs - Cantare**
Friday, Dec. 27, 5:30 pm: **Emerald City Voices**
Saturday, Dec. 28, 12:30 pm: **PrimeTime**

NEW FOR '24: LOBBY THEME NIGHTS

Checking out the tiny but fabulous fashionistas gracing the McCaw Hall lobby at every performance, decked to the nines in their pint-sized finest holiday togs, can be a show unto itself. Whatever anyone chooses to wear, all are welcomed, but guests can make their trip to *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® even more magical at select performances with an extra-special lobby experience:

Enchanted Lobby

All performances opening weekend, November 29, 30, and December 1

PNB's festive opening weekend lobby is enhanced by photo ops with Snowflake characters, pop-up magic shows, and sweet treats from Tacoma's own Brown & Haley for a sugar-high on the ride home.

Show Your Stripes

December 6, 7:30 pm

Clara's iconic red stripes make quite an impression. Attendees can make their own impact by wearing stripes to this performance (bonus points if they are red and white), and all guests receive a candy cane reward!

The Nightmare Before Nutcracker (aka Friday the 13th)

December 13, 7:30 pm

Missing Halloween already? Celebrate Friday the 13th by coming to *The Nutcracker* in your Halloween costume for the perfect mix of scary and merry!

NutKraken

December 14, 2:00 pm

Hockey fans who are also ballet lovers can make it a double-header at Seattle Center, by attending the matinee of *The Nutcracker*, then cheering on the Kraken at 7:00 as they face off against the Tampa Bay Lightning. Bonus points to guests wearing their Kraken jerseys to *The Nutcracker*. Oh, Buoy!

Ugly Sweater Day

December 20, 2:00 and 7:00 pm

[National Ugly Christmas Sweater Day](#) is December 20th. Celebrate by wearing your fabulously garish sweaters to either performance! Bonus points for matching outfits: Fun and embarrassment for the whole family!

Pajama Day

December 27, 12:30 and 5:30 pm

Whew, we're pooped! (And yet, there's still one more day to go.) Feeling worn out as the holiday season winds down? Relax and join PNB on Pajama Day. Guests are encouraged to wear their comfiest gear, their most festive PJs. (Nothing too risqué, please – we're a family show!) PNB is also partnering with [TeenTix](#) to offer \$5 tickets to [TeenTix](#) members for both performances on the 27th.

PROGRAM NOTES

George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®

A Ballet in Two Acts, Four Scenes, and Prologue

Based on E.T.A. Hoffman's tale, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* (1816)

Music: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (*The Nutcracker*, Op. 71, 1891-1892, with an excerpt from *The Sleeping Beauty*, Op. 66, 1889)

Choreography: George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust
Staging: Judith Fugate with Peter Boal and Garielle Whittle
Scenic and Costume Design: Ian Falconer
Lighting Design: James F. Ingalls
Original Production Premiere: December 6, 1892; Imperial Ballet, St. Petersburg, choreography by Lev Ivanov
Balanchine Production Premiere: February 2, 1954; New York City Ballet
Pacific Northwest Ballet Premiere: November 27, 2015
Running Time: Two hours and ten minutes, including one intermission

“*The Nutcracker* at our theater is for children young and old. That is, for children and for adults who are children at heart. Because, if an adult is a good person, in his heart he is still a child. In every person the best, the most important part is that which remains from his childhood.” -- *George Balanchine*

The Imperial Ballet's first performances of *The Nutcracker* in 1892 at the Maryinsky Theater in St. Petersburg received mixed reviews. Critics complained the music was “too symphonic” and the Sugar Plum Fairy wasn't given enough to do. Yet, the ballet endured and the suite of musical numbers subsequently drawn from Tchaikovsky's complete score for performance in the concert hall was immediately popular. The composer was particularly delighted by his use of the celesta, the “heavenly” keyboard instrument newly invented in Paris, for the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

When George Balanchine staged *The Nutcracker* for New York City Ballet in 1954, it was the six-year-old company's most ambitious project to date. Although NYCB's *Nutcracker* established the ballet as a perennial holiday favorite and became the model for many subsequent productions, the ballet had been danced in the United States since 1940, when Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo performed Alexandra Fedorova's staging of a one-act *Nutcracker* in New York City. The production subsequently toured the country throughout the '40s and '50s, giving many Americans their first experience of *The Nutcracker*. The first full-length *Nutcracker* in the U.S. was choreographed for San Francisco Ballet by Willam Christensen in 1944, replaced in 1954 with a production by Willam's brother, Lew Christensen.

When NYCB moved to the newly built New York State Theater in 1964, the *Nutcracker* scenery was completely redesigned to take advantage of the larger space. That same year, a young Judith Fugate, newly enrolled in the School of American Ballet, danced the role of Clara for the first time. She would continue in the role for four seasons before moving on to other parts, eventually joining New York City Ballet and adding the leading roles of Dewdrop and the Sugar Plum Fairy to her repertory. In 2015, Fugate took on the role of *repetiteur*, joining PNB Artistic Director Peter Boal and Garielle Whittle to stage Balanchine's *Nutcracker* for Pacific Northwest Ballet.

Pacific Northwest Ballet has its own *Nutcracker* history: In 1975, Pacific Northwest Dance, as the company was then called, acquired Lew Christensen's *Nutcracker*, performing the work for eight seasons. In 1983, under artistic directors Kent Stowell and Francia Russell, the Company presented a new production with choreography by Stowell and scenic and costume designs by famed children's author and illustrator Maurice Sendak. The Stowell & Sendak *Nutcracker* contributed significantly to the Company's identity, holding the stage for 32 seasons. In 2015, PNB acquired Balanchine's iconic production. New designs by another renowned children's author and illustrator, Ian Falconer, carry the Balanchine staging forward into the 21st century, while the staging by Fugate, Boal, and Whittle ensures the heritage of a tradition reaching back to 1892. [Excerpted from program notes by Doug Fullington. For complete notes and more, visit PNB.org.]

AND FINALLY: FUN FACTOIDS (new and improved)!

99.98% of PNB's production of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® was built entirely by artisans, craftspeople, carpenters, painters, and animators in the Pacific Northwest.

Over 50 drapers, stitchers, first hands, milliners, dyers, and painters built the *Nutcracker* costumes. PNB's shop was not large enough to accommodate the number of costumers required, so some were constructed at the Seattle Children's Theater and Seattle Repertory Theatre costume shops. There are

154 costumes in the show, not counting duplicates (i.e., multiple versions of the same costume, for different-sized dancers playing the same role – Sugar Plum Fairy, Cavalier, Dewdrop, etc.)

- Clara's party dress and Drosselmeier's coat lining required 10 light coats of red paint for each stripe.
- Each Snow skirt has nine layers of various fabrics. There are 56 points on each skirt.
- There are 174 velvet diamonds and 322 jewels on the Harlequin costume. The Harlequin's partner, Columbine, has 160 velvet diamonds and 272 jewels.
- 640: Black pompoms on the eight Polichinelle costumes.
- 760: Petals on the Waltz of the Flowers costumes. (19 costumes, including extras.)
- 10 feet and 60 pounds: The width and weight of Mother Ginger's skirt.
- 175: Number of snaps on the Mother Ginger costume.
- 4,000: Holes cut by hand to create the lace "doily" tutus and headpieces for the Marzipan costumes.
- 300: Jewels hand-sewn on the two Arabian (peacock) headpieces.
- 500: Yards of tubular horsehair used for the Party Mothers' hairpieces.
- 1,428: Cabochons sewn onto the Spanish women's costumes.
- 2,568: Appliques machine-sewn on the seven Spanish dresses.
- Sewing the Nutcracker doll required a 16" long needle.

Notes from the Wardrobe department (where costumes are maintained and managed once the Costume shop has finished building them):

- 17: Number of dressers required for a performance
- 15: Number of Wardrobe Maintenance crew during *The Nutcracker* (7 per shift)
- 8: Loads of laundry per show (for a total of 328 loads for the 41-show run)
- 7: Jugs of detergent
- 55: Rolling racks required to hang costumes
- 1-1/2: Gallons of stain remover
- 10 cases: Vodka used to deodorize and disinfect costumes that can't be laundered. (The Wardrobe team goes through 1.5 handles of vodka – approximately 2.25 liters – per show.)
- It takes 3 dressers and 2 stage crew to help Mother Ginger into/out of the costume.

Seventeen mice (eight adult mice, eight young mice, and the seven-headed Mouse King) were built by Erik Andor and a team of fabricators in his Pioneer Square studio.

- 98 yards of "fur" were used to create the mice. They have a total of 230 whiskers. Each adult tail consists of 25 segments. Each ear is made up of six pieces. Laid end-to-end, the mice's upper lips total 782 inches.
- Eagle-eyed audience members may spy one gold tooth on the Mouse King.

35 carpenters, painters, artisans and craftspeople in the PNB Scene shop built and painted the sets and props.

- There are 22 painted drops.
- 3,000 square yards of fabric were used in the creation of the scenery.
- 343 gallons of paint were used in the painting of the scenery.
- The corridor scrim during the Prologue depicts *Nutcracker* historical figures Alexander Dumas, E.T.A. Hoffman, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Marius Petipa, Lev Ivanov, George Balanchine, and Lincoln Kirstein.
- It took 400 hours to build the Christmas tree. At its full height it stands 40 feet. There are 450 lights on it.
- There are 32 snow pompons, and 30 cubic feet of "snow" are deployed during the Act I Snow scene, per performance.

One of the delightful highlights of PNB's production of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*[®] is the animated video that accompanies the overture. (For an excerpt, [click here.](#)) Created by [Straightface Studios](#) located in the Interbay neighborhood of Seattle, the three-and-a-half minute video takes audiences on a flight through the woods and a New England town, up to the front steps of the Stahlbaum home. The town was inspired by antique mid-19th Century maps and satellite images of New England.

The terrain covers 372 sq. miles and there are over 1.5 million trees, 8,540 bushes, 287 buildings, and seven mice. In 2016, Straightface created a second video to play during the first act violin solo following the Party scene. This video integrates live-action ballet dancers into a computer-generated world.

Fun Facts from the PNB Orchestra Pit:

- The world-famous PNB Orchestra is comprised of 59 musicians, although additional musicians fill in at times during the long *Nutcracker* run.
- Number of PNBO musicians who have been with the company 25+ years: 29
- Approximate number of *Nutcracker* performances a founding member of the PNB Orchestra could have feasibly played through December 28, 2024: 1,339
- Weight of PNB's celeste, which plays the iconic "Waltz of the Sugar Plum Fairy" music: 180 lbs.
- The only note that the basses play during the Chinese Tea divertissement: Low B-flat pizzicato, 46 times (with great feeling, of course.)
- Approximate number of string lights that violinist Tom Dziekonski uses to decorate music stands in the Orchestra pit: 50
- Approximate number of different themed string lights in his personal collection: 900
- Installation of the Orchestra pit's decorative lights takes approximately five hours.

The prominent Christmas star that appears in the Snow scene at the end of Act I is presented by renowned artist Dale Chihuly. *Winter Star*, from Chihuly's popular *Chandelier* series, debuted as part of the artist's iconic *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000* exhibition, and has also been exhibited at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (near London) and New York Botanical Garden.

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Supporting sponsors for Pacific Northwest Ballet's 2024 run of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® are Alaska Airlines, BECU, and Browne Family Vineyards. Principal sponsorship support for the 2015 PNB premiere of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® with original scenic and costume design by Ian Falconer, was made possible through the generosity of Pam & Dan Baty. Additional major support was provided by Patty Edwards, Carl & Renee Behnke, and Peter & Peggy Horvitz, along with donations from over 900 other individuals. Star Sponsor is Chihuly Studios. The works of George Balanchine performed by Pacific Northwest Ballet, including *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*®, are made possible in part by The Louise Nadeau Endowed Fund.

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Everything is subject to change. For further information, please visit PNB.org.

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