



The 47th Annual Production of *The Nutcracker*

The State's Longest-Running *Nutcracker* Enchants More People, Ever More

- WHO:** Ballet Austin
Choreography by Stephen Mills, Music by Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky,
Musical Accompaniment by The Austin Symphony Orchestra
- WHAT:** **Ballet Austin's 47th Annual Production of *The Nutcracker***
- WHERE:** The Long Center for the Performing Arts, 701 W. Riverside Drive
- WHEN:** Saturday, December 5 – Wednesday, December 23 at 7:30 p.m. or 2 p.m.
(performance times vary depending on the day)
- TICKETS:** \$15 - \$71 at 512.476.2163, www.balletaustin.org or at Ballet Austin's Box Office at
501 W. 3rd Street, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Saturday

AUSTIN, Texas—Ballet Austin brings the 47th Annual Production of *The Nutcracker* to The Long Center for the Performing Arts for the second consecutive year with its characters, costumes, sets, and an unforgettable story set to a timeless score. The decades-old tradition is set to enchant more than ever.

"Ballet Austin deeply embraces the community we serve and always strive to reduce as many barriers to participation as possible. The 47th annual production of this classic holiday favorite will be as magical as ever and even more inclusive than before," Stephen Mills, Artistic Director of Ballet Austin. "We're raising the bar on accessibility in the hopes that as many as possible can experience this beloved masterpiece."

In the effort to expand accessibility Ballet Austin presents performances of *The Nutcracker* with audio describers for the visually impaired community on both December 12 and 20. Additionally, these services will be available to students from the School for the Deaf at a special performance for local school children on December 8.

Unique traditions continue this year as well. Local notables will once again fill the dress of the favorite Mother Ginger role in each performance. Each of these local personalities will transform into the larger-than-life character and climb atop a platform into an eight-foot satin skirt, from which the 14 children cast as Bon-Bons will spill out to dance onto the Sugar Plum Fairy's court.

Making guest performances as Mother Ginger, this year's production will feature:

December 5, 7:30 pm – Art Acevedo, Chief of Police

December 6, 2:00 pm – Lucy C. Nazro, Head of School St. Andrew's Episcopal School

December 11, 7:30 pm – Terri Gruca, KVUE News Anchor

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December 12, 7:30 pm – Marc Ott, Austin City Manager
December 13, 2:00 pm – Gail Goestenkers, Head Coach of UT Women’s Basketball
December 18, 7:30 pm – Pam LeBlanc, Fitness Writer Austin American-Statesman
December 19, 2:00 pm – Col. Donald M. MacWillie, Fort Hood Commander of the United States Army Operational Test Command
7:30 pm – Lee Leffingwell, Mayor of Austin
December 20, 2:00 pm – Terri McCormick, Majic 95 DJ
December 21, 7:30 pm – Sara Hickman, Musician
December 22, 7:30 pm – Robert Barnhart, Film Producer
December 23, 2:00 pm – Rich Segal, News 8 Austin Meteorologist

These Mother Gingers will join other Texas luminaries who have appeared in the beloved comical role of Mother Ginger in years past such as Michael Dell, Lance Armstrong, Governor Ann Richards, Kinky Friedman, and John Paul DeJoria.

Ballet Austin’s production of *The Nutcracker*, an Austin institution in itself, will be held at one of Austin’s newest masterpieces, the Long Center, which opened in March 2008 after almost 10 years of planning and construction.

Ballet Austin’s *The Nutcracker* boasts a cast of over 200, including 160 Ballet Austin Academy students, ages eight and older, who were selected to dance the roles of Clara, Fritz, Party Children, Mice, Angels, Soldiers, Bon-Bons and as Chinese dancers. The production is accompanied by the Austin Symphony’s full 40-person orchestra.

History of the Nutcracker Suite

The Nutcracker ballet is based on the book called "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King" written by E.T.A. Hoffman. In 1891, the legendary choreographer Marius Petipa commissioned Tchaikovsky to write the music for *The Nutcracker* ballet. In 1892, the first showing of *The Nutcracker* took place at the Mariinsky Theatre of Russia, home of the Kirov Ballet. The production made its way to Western Europe in the 1930's and to America by 1940, performed by Ballet Russe. The first American full length production was performed by the San Francisco Ballet, choreographed by W. Christensen. *The Nutcracker* has since become an annual holiday tradition. A selection of eight of the more popular numbers from the ballet was made by the composer, forming "The Nutcracker Suite," designed for concert performance. The version that Ballet Austin puts on stage is a variation of the original that was choreographed by Stephen Mills and is the longest running production of *The Nutcracker* in the state of Texas.

About Ballet Austin

As distinctive and dynamic as the city it calls home, Ballet Austin welcomes people near and far to participate in its "classically innovative" vision for the democratization of dance. From their bustling, urban headquarters at the Butler Dance Education Center and Community School in

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downtown Austin, Ballet Austin and artistic director Stephen Mills actively engage the community, dancers, and audiences alike. Ballet Austin is the 15th largest classical ballet company in the country and also operates the largest combined training facility associated with a professional ballet company in the US. With well over 3,000 students in one facility, the Academy trains more than 800 classical ballet students annually and the Butler Community School serves over 2,500 people of all ages/skill levels. Also home to one of Austin's top-ranked Pilates Centers, the Butler Community School offers a wide variety of dance and fitness classes. With a rich history spanning five decades, a commitment to education, and acclaimed productions in Austin and across the nation, the organization is equally committed to the international craft of dance as it is to the community it serves. *The New York Times* proclaims Ballet Austin "a company with big ambitions" originating work that is "absorbing."

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This production is funded and supported in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes a great nation deserves great art.

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