

BALLET *Austin*

Ballet Austin's *The Nutcracker*: 2011 Mother Ginger 'Celebrity' Cast List and Finalists in Online Contest Announced

WHO: Ballet Austin
Choreography by Stephen Mills
Music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Musical Accompaniment by The Austin Symphony Orchestra

WHAT: 49th Annual Production of *The Nutcracker*

WHEN: December 3, 9, 10*, 16, 17, 21, 22 at 7:30 p.m.
December 4, 11, 17, 18*, 23 at 2 p.m.
*Audio described by VSA Texas

WHERE: Dell Hall at The Long Center for the Performing Arts

TICKETS: \$15 - \$74 at www.balletaustin.org, 512.476.2163
Ballet Austin Box Office at 501 W. 3rd Street

AUSTIN, TX – November 15, 2011 – As Austin's favorite holiday tradition, *The Nutcracker*, gears up for its December 3-23 run, Ballet Austin announces this year's roster of Mother Ginger guest stars and finalists for the second annual "Austin's Mother Ginger Contest."

Ballet Austin's production of *The Nutcracker* boasts a cast of over 200, including 160 Ballet Austin Academy students ages eight and older, selected to dance the roles of Clara, Fritz, Party Children, Mice, Angels, Soldiers, Bon-Bons and Chinese Dancers. The production is accompanied by The Austin Symphony Orchestra.

In the second act of *The Nutcracker*, the Mother Ginger character takes the stage—a long-standing tradition for Ballet Austin—portrayed by a local 'celebrity' from the community. Mother Ginger stands atop a 4-foot-high platform in an outrageous satin costume, from which 16 Bon-Bon dancers emerge and dance playfully. Ballet Austin today proudly announces special guests for the cameo role:

- Saturday, Dec. 3, 7:30 Mary Ann Laverty: *Silicon Labs*
- Sunday, Dec. 4, 2:00 David Bull: *Chef Partner, Congress / Second Bar & Kitchen*
- Friday, Dec. 9, 7:30 Regina Rodriguez: *Anchor, Univision 62*
- Saturday, Dec. 10, 7:30 Sara Osburn: *JB & Sandy Morning Show, Mix 94.7*
- Sunday, Dec. 11, 2:00 Kirk Watson: *Texas State Senator - District 14*
- Friday, Dec. 16, 7:30 Frank Volpicella: *Executive News Director, KVUE*
- Saturday, Dec. 17, 2:00 Colonel Kenny Crawford: *Deputy Commander/Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Operational Test Command*
- Saturday, Dec. 17, 7:30 Tavo Hellmund: *Chairman, Formula 1 United States*
- Sunday, Dec. 18, 2:00 Jeff Stensland: *Reporter, YNN Austin*
- Wednesday, Dec. 21, 7:30 Tim McClure: *Founder GSD&M/Mythos*
- Thursday, Dec. 22, 7:30 **BALLET AUSTIN'S MOTHER GINGER CONTEST WINNER**
- Friday, Dec. 23, 2:00 Andrea McWilliams: *Lobbyist*

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“Austin’s Mother Ginger Contest” recognizes and celebrates an unsung community or business leader who is generous, respected, influential and adored in the community: a way to help honor a dedicated, giving Austinite for community service that goes above and beyond. Through an online nomination and selection process, we’ve narrowed the list to several finalists.

Today Ballet Austin releases the list of finalists and opens voting on their website.
www.balletaustin.org/motherginger

During online voting now through November 30, the Austin community decides who is crowned Mother Ginger for the December 22 performance.

Finalists for “Austin’s Mother Ginger Contest” are:

- Brian Archimbaud: *Capital Campaign Director, Boy Scouts of America*
- Ross Bennett: *President and Head Designer, The Ross Bennett Collection*
- Dr. Ari Brown: *Pediatrician and Author of Baby 411 Book Series*
- Herlinda Burks: *Nurse, North Austin Medical Center Wound Care*
- Ted Burton: *Executive Vice President, EnviroMedia*
- Jennifer Canady: *President, Ballet Austin Guild*
- Doug Guller: *Owner of The Parish, Beale Street Tavern, and Pelons*
- Freddy Herrera: *Teacher, Forest Trail Elementary*
- Khotso Khabele: *Founder and Executive Director, Khabele School*
- Mike Koleber: *Owner, Nitro Swimming*
- Todd Mears: *Assistant Children’s Minister, Riverbend Church*
- Dave McGrath: *Headmaster & Owner, Paragon Preparatory Middle School*
- Etta Moore: *CEO, Girl Scouts of Central Texas*
- Henry Perry, *Bastrop City Fire Chief*
- Rochelle Rae: *Owner and CEO, Rae Cosmetics*
- Graham Reynolds: *Musician and Composer*
- Alejandro Ruelas: *Co-founder and CMO, LatinWorks*
- Ronda Rutledge: *Executive Director, Sustainable Food Center*
- Bert Tito: *Founder, Tito’s Vodka*

How to Vote

Public online voting begins immediately at www.balletaustin.org/motherginger and will continue until November 30.

Everyone is invited and allowed to enter **one vote per day** for their favorite nominee at www.balletaustin.org/motherginger. The winner will be announced December 1.

Prizes

The winning candidate will appear on stage for the 7:30 p.m. December 22 performance of *The Nutcracker*. The selected Mother Ginger will also win eight box seat tickets for their performance, access to a VIP dressing room, a discount code for friends and family, a gift basket filled with surprises, and a commemorative photo and video of the performance.

The winner will join the ranks of such notable past Mother Gingers as Ann Richards, Lance Armstrong, Luci Baines Johnson, Robert Rodriguez, Molly Ivins, Michael Dell, Joe Sears, Ray Benson, Evan Smith, Marc Ott, Sara Hickman, Dr. Larry Faulkner, Kinky Friedman, Maestro

Peter Bay, Kevin Rollins, Shawn Colvin, Turk Pipkin, Marcia Ball, Karen Kuykendall, John Paul Dejoria, and Mayor Leffingwell.

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. Ballet Austin’s production 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 audiences near and far to participate in its “classically innovative” vision for the democratization of dance. With a rich history spanning five decades, acclaimed productions, and one of the nation's largest classical ballet academies, the organization is poised for an even greater future. From their home at the Butler Dance Education Center and Community School in downtown Austin, Ballet Austin and artistic director Stephen Mills actively engage the community, dancers, and audiences alike. The New York Times proclaims Ballet Austin “a company with big ambitions” originating work that is “absorbing.”

CONTACT INFORMATION

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