



## **Ballet Austin Announces Winner of This Year's "Austin's Mother Ginger Contest"**

- WHO:** Ballet Austin  
Choreography by Stephen Mills  
Music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
Musical Accompaniment by The Austin Symphony Orchestra
- WHAT:** "Austin's Mother Ginger Contest" Winner for the 49<sup>th</sup> 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.  
Contest winner will perform December 22  
\*Audio described by VSA Texas
- WHERE:** Dell Hall at The Long Center for the Performing Arts
- TICKETS:** \$15 - \$74 at [www.balletaustin.org](http://www.balletaustin.org), 512.476.2163  
Ballet Austin Box Office at 501 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

**AUSTIN, TX – December 1, 2011** – Ballet Austin announces the 2011 winner of "Austin's Mother Ginger Contest." Freddy Herrera, a Forest Trail Elementary 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, will don the coveted "crown" for the December 22 performance of Ballet Austin's *The Nutcracker* at the Long Center for Performing Arts. More than 28,000 votes were cast in this year's contest, with Herrera receiving over 27 percent of the vote among 19 finalists.

"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. After an online nomination and selection process, Ballet Austin then presented the list of finalists, for which the Austin community cast votes for three weeks, through November 30.

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. Herrera will share the Mother Ginger honor this year with Chef David Bull of Congress / Second Bar

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& Kitchen, Sara Osburn of the JB & Sandy Morning Show on Mix 94.7, Texas State Senator Kirk Watson, and Colonel Kenny Crawford, Deputy Commander/ Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Operational Test Command at Fort Hood.

Ballet Austin's *The Nutcracker* runs December 3- 23 at The Long Center for the Performing Arts. For ticket information, visit [www.balletaustin.org](http://www.balletaustin.org) or call the box office at 512.476.2163

### **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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**MEDIA:** Contact LuAnn Glowacz ([luann.glowacz@balletaustin.org](mailto:luann.glowacz@balletaustin.org); 512.476.9151, ext. 101) to schedule an interview or other media coverage.

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