



**Austin's Holiday Tradition: *The Nutcracker*
Ballet Austin Announces "Austin's Mother Ginger" Winner**

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

WHAT: "Austin's Mother Ginger" Winner Announced for *The Nutcracker*

WHEN: December 4*, 10*, 11, 17*, 18, 21 at 7:30 p.m.
December 5, 12, 18, 19*, 22, 23 at 2 p.m.
Winner's Appearance December 23
*Audio described by VSA Texas

WHERE: The Long Center for the Performing Arts, Michael & Susan Dell Hall,
701 W. Riverside Drive, 512.457.5100

TICKETS: \$15 - \$71 at 512.476.2163, www.balleteaustin.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 today announces Jeanne Goka—principal of The Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders—as the winner of the "Austin's Mother Ginger" contest. Receiving 21,179 votes over the course of the 15-day voting period, Goka will star in the Mother Ginger role in Ballet Austin's final performance of *The Nutcracker* on Thursday, December 23.

Goka is the principal of the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders—and as shown by her number of votes—she is highly regarded by students, faculty, and families of the community. "Even when I was thousands of votes behind, [my students] were tenacious and loyal, never missing a beat in their determination to transform their principal into Mother Ginger." Goka said, crediting this honor primarily to the persistence of her students.

Goka was nominated alongside 20 other community leaders and beloved Austinites—some of whom received several thousands of votes from the public, including runners up Mary Ann Laverty (Silicon Labs employee and involved community member) and Don A. "Skeeter" Miller (Owner of County Line Restaurants & Cannoli Joe's).

Goka continued, "Watching the kids escape from Mother Ginger's skirt has always been one of my favorite scenes of *The Nutcracker*" Adding that appearing as Mother Ginger in the final performance is "a gift of a dream." She has worked in the education community for 30 years, previously as the director of Austin ISD's Kealing Middle School Magnet Program for Advanced Academics. The Ann Richards School (www.annrichardsschool.org) is a public, all-girls school founded to prepare young women to attend and graduate from college.

Goka 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, Mayor Leffingwell, and even commanding colonels from Fort Hood.

Ballet Austin hosted a contest for the coveted role of Mother Ginger in the final performance of the show this year. Austinites nominated the most respected, adored, influential, caring, and/or

BALLET *Austin*

generous community leaders to win the role and prize package. As the contest winner, Goka will take the stage in the second act, standing atop a 4-foot-high platform in an outrageous satin costume, from which 16 Bon Bon dancers emerge and dance playfully.

Ballet Austin brings their 48th Annual Production of *The Nutcracker* to The Long Center for the Performing Arts for the third consecutive year with its enchanting characters, magical sets, and an unforgettable story set to a timeless score.

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 Chinese Dancers. Ballet Austin's is the longest running production of *The Nutcracker* in the state and is accompanied by The Austin Symphony's 40-person orchestra.

The full list of special guests for the role include:

- Saturday, Dec. 4, 7:30 George E. Martin: *President, St. Edward's University*
- Sunday, Dec. 5, 2:00 Todd Boatwright: *News 8 Austin Morning Anchor*
- Friday, Dec. 10, 7:30 Dr. Meria Carstarphen: *Superintendent, AISD*
- Saturday, Dec. 11, 7:30 Marques Harper: *Style Writer, Austin American-Statesman*
- Sunday, Dec. 12, 2:00 Col. Steve Duke: *Fort Hood, US Operational Test Command*
- Friday, Dec. 17, 7:30 Mike Barnes: *Sports Director, KVUE-TV*
- Saturday, Dec. 18, 2:00 Rhoda Mae Kerr: *Austin Fire Chief*
- Saturday, Dec. 18, 7:30 Cassiday Proctor: *JB & Sandy Morning Show, Mix 94.7 & KEYE-TV*
- Sunday, Dec. 19, 2:00 Christy Casey Moore: *Exec. Dir., Susan G. Komen for the Cure (Austin)*
- Tuesday, Dec. 21, 7:30 Richard Garriott: *Astronaut, Video Game Developer*
- Wednesday, Dec. 22, 2:00 Lorrie Garcia: *Community Volunteer/Philanthropist*
- Thursday, Dec. 23, 2:00 Jeanne Goka: *Principal, Ann Richards School*

Prizes

Goka will appear on stage for the 2 p.m. December 23 production of *The Nutcracker*. She will also win 8 box seat tickets for the performance, access to a celebrity dressing room, a discount code for all other friends and family, a gift basket including Butler Community School Class-Cards and merchandise as well as a commemorative photo and video of herself in costume.

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.

BALLET *Austin*

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 new 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."

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WEB: www.balletaustin.org

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