

BALLET *Austin*

For Austin's Holiday Tradition: *The Nutcracker*
Ballet Austin asks Austin to crown their Mother Ginger
City's Business, Nonprofit, Civic Leaders Vie for Chance to Get in 'the Big Dress'

WHO: Ballet Austin
WHAT: Austin Selects! "Austin's Mother Ginger Contest" for *The Nutcracker*
WHEN: Nominations: Until midnight, October 31
Voting: November 8-22
Announcement of the winner: December 1
Performance: December 23rd at 2 pm
WHERE: The Long Center for the Performing Arts, Michael & Susan Dell Hall

AUSTIN, Texas – As Ballet Austin brings its 48th Annual Production of *The Nutcracker* to The Long Center for the Performing Arts, citizens have the opportunity to cast the beloved role of Mother Ginger for the final performance.

After nearly five decades convening "Austin's holiday tradition," Ballet Austin will welcome "Austin's choice" to the stage, honoring an outstanding citizen with a proven record of community service. The organization seeks nominations and will host the online voting process that will complete the cast of 225 professional dancers and Ballet Austin Academy students for the December 23rd closing matinee performance.

The Mother Ginger role, guest-filled in Austin by notable Austinites, has become an anticipated part of Ballet Austin's annual production. The character is a non-speaking part involving a colorful head dress, elaborate make-up and an appearance on stage for a 3 minute "performance." Mother Ginger sits atop the 8-foot high dress in an outrageously oversized costume, from which a score of brightly-colored Bon Bons children emerge and dance playfully during the second act. No dancing, acting, or speaking skills required.

This nightly-changing cameo role of notable Austin personalities has become a unique part of Ballet Austin's interpretation of the 1891 masterpiece. Former guest Mother Gingers include: The late Governor Ann Richards, Lance Armstrong, Luci Baines Johnson, Robert Rodriguez, Molly Ivins, Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson, Michael Dell, Joe Sears, Ray Benson, Luci Baines Johnson, Evan Smith, Marc Ott, Sara Hickman, Hollywood Henderson, Robert Rodriguez, Dr. Larry Faulkner, Kinky Friedman, Maestro Peter Bay, Kevin Rollins, Shawn Colvin, Turk Pipkin, Marcia Ball, Karen Kuykendall, John Paul DeJoria, Mayor Leffingwell, and each year welcomes a service man/woman or commander from Fort Hood.

Ballet Austin's production of *The Nutcracker* boasts a cast of over 225, 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 Orchestra.

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Nominations can be submitted starting now at www.balletaustin.org/motherginger or via email (see below) and will be due on or before the stroke of midnight October 31. Finalists will be announced Monday, November 8 and public voting will immediately begin. Voting will end on November 22 and a winner will be announced Dec 1.

Participants may nominate themselves or others. Nominees will be placed on a webpage ballot for city-wide voting. The public may vote once a day during the voting period. Candidates must be available on the day/time of the 2:00 matinee performance on December 23rd. If a chosen finalist cannot be on stage, Ballet Austin will default to the next most popular candidate. Ballet Austin reserves the right to decline to accept a nominee for any reason.

Prizes

The winning candidate will appear on stage for the 2 pm December 23 production of *The Nutcracker*. The selected Mother Ginger will also win 8 box seat tickets for their performance, access to a 'celebrity' dressing room prior to their performance, 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 themselves in costume.

How to Nominate

Submit someone for consideration at www.balletaustin.org/motherginger or send the following information to contest@balletaustin.org

Name of Nominee

Up to 5 organizations they are involved with (professional or non-profit)
Headshot of nominee (must be at least 50k file when cropped, no more than 4mb)

To be used ONLY to contact the nominees or winner (Not for publication or commercial use):

Email of nominee
Phone # of nominee
Name of person nominating
Email of person nominating
Relation to nominee

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.

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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 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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MEDIA: For interviews, details contact David Wyatt at david@wyattbrand.com and 512.450.4395

WEB: www.balletaustin.org

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