

BALLET *Austin*

Ballet Austin Celebrates Best-Ever Production of *The Nutcracker* Austin's Holiday Tradition Sees Record Single Ticket Sales and Attendance

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

WHAT: Record Breaking Sales for *The Nutcracker*

WHEN: Show ran from Dec 4-23, 2010

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

AUSTIN, Texas—Ballet Austin today announces that their 48th Annual Production of *The Nutcracker* (Dec 4-23) surpassed the all-time single ticket sales record for the production with over 26,000 people in attendance. In 12 public performances at The Long Center, the production features a cast of 200, enchanting characters, magical sets, and an unforgettable story set to a timeless score by Tchaikovsky performed by the Austin Symphony Orchestra. Ballet Austin has the longest running production of *The Nutcracker* in the state.

The popular run follows their best-selling season opener in September of this year, in which the company performed *Carmina Burana* and *Kai* to three sold-out performances at the Dell Hall.

A beloved part of Ballet Austin's interpretation of the 1891 masterpiece is the nightly cameo role of Mother Ginger by notable Austin personalities including Ann Richards, Lance Armstrong, Luci Baines Johnson, Molly Ivins, Marc Ott, Robert Rodriguez, Dr. Larry Faulkner, Kinky Friedman, John Paul DeJoria, and even commanding colonels from Fort Hood.

This year, the Mother Gingers were George E. Martin: President, St. Edward's University; Todd Boatwright: News 8 Austin Morning Anchor; Meria Carstarphen: Superintendent, AISD; Marques Harper: Style Writer, Austin American-Statesman; Col. Steve Duke: Fort Hood, US Operational Test Command; Mike Barnes: Sports Director, KVUE-TV; Rhoda Mae Kerr: Austin Fire Chief; Cassiday Proctor: JB & Sandy Morning Show, Mix 94.7 & KEYE-TV; Christy CaseyMoore: Exec. Dir., Susan G. Komen for the Cure (Austin); Richard Garriott: Astronaut, Video Game Developer; Lorrie Garcia: Community Volunteer/Philanthropist; and the winner of a popular public nomination and voting competition: Jeanne Goka: Principal, Ann Richards School.

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

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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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