

BALLET

CO. LABORATORY

NUTCRACKER IN WONDERLAND



Huss Center for the
Performing Arts
St. Paul Academy and Summit School

PERFORMANCES

Fri & Sat Dec 14-15, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.
Sun, Dec 16, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

TICKETS

balletcolaboratory.org
\$22/\$27/\$35

Student Performance: The Mabel Tainter Center for the Arts, Menomonie, WI
Friday December 21, 2018 at 1pm

Act I

On Christmas Eve, the Stahlbaum family throws their annual holiday party. A studious Clara is home from college for the holidays, and reluctant to engage in her brother Fritz's merry-making. Fritz attempts to steal one of her favorite childhood books: *Wonderland*. As their party guests begin to arrive, excited about the holiday celebration, Clara is absorbed in rediscovering the story of Wonderland and takes little interest in the festivities.

Clara emerges from her book when a latecomer arrives. It's Patty, a grade school friend of Clara's. They haven't seen each other in ages and Patty has brought Clara a gift—a beautiful, classic Nutcracker from Germany. Patty's joy is contagious, and she manages to persuade Clara to join the dancing.

The final arrival to the party is Clara's eccentric Uncle Drosselmeyer. Everyone is thrilled when he begins to perform magic tricks. Clara is apprehensive when Uncle Drosselmeyer takes her book, but she begins to relax with the other guests and enjoy his theatrical descriptions of magical Wonderland. Then Clara asks him to tell the Nutcracker's story. Although Clara knows that these tales could only exist in her imagination, she cannot help but feel something tangible when Uncle Drosselmeyer finishes his storytelling. Soon after, Patty has to leave the party and Clara is saddened by her departure. She decides to retire to her room early, taking the Nutcracker and the *Wonderland* book along.

Clara reads her book until she grows tired and falls asleep on her desk, Nutcracker in her arms. The door to her bedroom opens and the White Rabbit sticks her nose out to explore. Who is this creature asleep with this book? Suddenly, the clock strikes midnight! The White Rabbit has lost track of time and departs quickly. Clara

awakens, surrounded by rats who have crept in while she was sleeping. As they spin her around the room, Uncle Drosselmeyer enters...but something is different about him. All at once, the room begins to shrink and the Rat Queen and King emerge from the shadows. Clara begins to panic, but Patty arrives on the scene. A battle ensues as Patty tries to protect Clara and guide her to the door. This upsets the Rat Queen and she commands the rats to close in on the pair. Clara chooses to face the Rat Queen to save Patty, and the pair are able to escape through the door.

Act II

Clara and Patty find themselves in a strange new place. It's almost as if they have taken a trip into the pages of Clara's book. They wander around, looking for someone to direct them. All the inhabitants of Wonderland, including the Mad Hatter, begin to gather to ponder their unfamiliar guests. Little do Clara and Patty know as they set out to explore that the Queen of Hearts had seen them enter her Wonderland. Along their journey, Clara and Patty encounter the mischievous Cheshire Cat and the mesmerizing Caterpillar who gives them treats. The ever-late White Rabbit bounces in again, racing Time. Clara and Patty join their new acquaintances at the Tea Party, hosted by the Mad Hatter. After the party, Clara and Patty happen upon the spiteful Queen of Hearts. She is not happy that Clara and Patty have disrupted her realm and wants them gone. She bellows, "Off with their heads!" Clara and Patty hide behind the rose bushes and manage to get away from the Queen. Flowers waltz outside the palace, and in a final whirlwind, Clara and Patty sneak back home.

Suddenly, Clara awakes to find herself back in her bedroom. Could it have all been a dream?

Ballet Co.Laboratory's *Nutcracker in Wonderland* mixes together the story of The Nutcracker with the tale of Alice in Wonderland. Keep reading to learn more about these classics!

Alice in Wonderland

This children's book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, was written by British author Lewis Carroll in 1865. Carroll originally told this tale to the young daughters of Henry George Liddell, a dean at a church where Carroll studied. One of the daughters, Alice, wanted Carroll to write a book full of these fantasy stories he told. This book was eventually edited and published for all to read, with illustrations by John Tenniel.

The story follows Alice, a young girl who has fallen asleep while reading outside. She begins to dream, following a White Rabbit down his rabbit hole into another world. She encounters many creatures that you'll see in our ballet today, including the Cheshire Cat, Mad Hatter, and the Queen. She ends up in trouble with the Queen, and just as the order is given to be off with Alice's head, Alice wakes up from her dream.

The story is full of imagination, with secret riddles, wild talking creatures, shrinking rooms, and magic treats. While most children's stories of the time spoke of moral lessons, Carroll's fantasy world defies logical thinking and encourages imaginations to run wild. The magic of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has been explored in film, theater, and ballet adaptations of the story.

The Nutcracker

Perhaps one of the most widely recognized ballets, *The Nutcracker* is based off of E.T.A. Hoffmann's story *Nutcracker and Mouse King*. Written in 1816, this story follows little Marie, a young girl who has been gifted a nutcracker doll. When Marie creeps downstairs to check on the doll at night, the nutcracker comes to life, and a battle between mice and toy soldiers ensues, beginning Marie's nightmare. This dark tale was made lighter with an adaptation by Alexandre Dumas in 1844. His *The Tale of a Nutcracker* creates a delightful story of young Marie (also known as Klara or Clara in many versions), who still receives a nutcracker doll and experiences a battle between mice and soldier in her dream. But she also dreams of sugar plums and a land of sweets, waking up safe and sound in her own world with her nutcracker tucked in her arms.

Dumas' story was the basis for the first ballet production of *The Nutcracker*, which premiered in Russia in 1892. This classic story has been modified and performed all over the world and is a huge part of the holidays for many!

Ballet Co.Laboratory has used the classic *Nutcracker* score for *Nutcracker in Wonderland*. Keep reading to learn more about the composer behind this beautiful music!

The Music: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born on May 7, 1840 in Russia. As a young child, he was always interested in music, but his parents did not allow him to pursue it because it was not considered an acceptable job. But his passion for music stayed with him, and at age 22, Tchaikovsky resigned from his position at the Ministry of Justice in St Petersburg to order to attend the St Petersburg Music Conservatory. His talent was realized by another composer named Anton Rubenstein, and Rubenstein's brother, Nikolai, offered Tchaikovsky a teaching position at the Moscow Conservatory after his graduation.

Tchaikovsky was a troubled young man and he was quite emotional and even depressed, which is reflected in his music. His musical style was heavily influenced by both Russian and Western techniques and sounds, and he used the skills developed during his conservatory education to write his music. His compositions are colorful, romantic, and feature grand harmonies and passionate melodies. Though his music is widely enjoyed today, Tchaikovsky's work was often disliked by other musicians, and he himself also thought of much of his compositions as failures.

Tchaikovsky composed various types of music, from symphonies with multiple sections, to operas, to ballets. His music style flows nicely and almost encourages movement, making it ideal for ballet. His first ballet was *Swan Lake*, which was first performed in 1877 and is now one of the highlights of classical ballet repertoire. He later composed the score for *The Nutcracker*, which premiered in 1892. During his lifetime, *The Nutcracker* was not performed often and was not well-liked by audiences; now, the production is a staple for ballet companies all over the world around the holidays.

Who's Who: The Characters of *Nutcracker in Wonderland*

You'll be meeting many characters throughout the ballet! You can read more about them in the program you receive at the performance, but here's a sneak peek at some of the cast:

Appearing in Act 1:

Clara: Home from college, Clara is more interested in her books than the holiday festivities. Her brother, Fritz, is quite the troublemaker, to their father's dismay.

Patty: A childhood friend of Clara's. Patty is lively and outgoing, unlike Clara.

Drosselmeyer: Clara's uncle, a crazy magician and wonderful storyteller.

Cheshire Cat: One of the creatures of Wonderland. This slinky feline is always disappearing!

White Rabbit: Always late, this Wonderland native is curious about Clara.

Time: White Rabbit's nemesis...

Rat King and Queen: The fearless leaders of the rats.

Appearing in Act 2:

Caterpillar: a mysterious inhabitant of Wonderland, this creature offers treats to Clara and Patty.

Mad Hatter: crazy and eccentric, he throws a lively tea party!

Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum: partners in crime who wander around Wonderland.

Queen of Hearts: The ruler of Wonderland. She likes things her way and is not happy when the peace of her realm is disrupted by Clara and Patty.

The People Behind *Nutcracker in Wonderland*

It takes a team of hard-working people to put on a show like *Nutcracker in Wonderland*. While you see the dancers during the performance, there is a lot happening behind the scenes that creates the magic onstage. Below is a list of people involved in this show:

Professional Dancers: There are 8 members of the professional company of Ballet Co.Laboratory featured in this production. These dancers have trained since they were young, and many have pursued training at big ballet schools and university programs around the country. This is their full-time job! Look for their names in the programs you receive at the performance.

Students and School Manager: The students of the school of Ballet Co.Laboratory are in the process of their dance training, which is organized by Anna Roehr, School Manager, and Deborah Nettell, Faculty Lead. Our students have worked very hard to be a part of this production!

Artistic Director: hires dancers for the company, decides casting, runs rehearsals and coaches dancers for the stage, and often choreographs new ballets. The Artistic Director of Ballet Co.Laboratory is Zoé Emilie Henrot. Zoé also dances professionally with the company- if you look closely, you might just spot her as the Queen of Hearts.

Board of Directors: manages the business of Ballet Co.Laboratory. Creates policies and procedures for the organization, controls the budget, organizes fundraising opportunities, creates a network of sponsors and donors, and much more. The Board members are Denis Henrot, Jim DeLeo, and Sara Wilson.

Stage Manager: runs the performance, including cues that control and change lights, sound, scenery, and the raising and lowering of the curtain. Keeps the show running on time and calls dancers to their places. The Stage Manager for *Nutcracker in Wonderland* is Jacob Edholm; he is assisted by his wife, Barbara Edholm.

Costume Designer and Costume Team: designs costumes that showcase the movement of the dancers and fit the setting of the ballet. Also modifies costumes to fit each dancer. The Costume Designer is Hope Hagen, and she is helped by a team of volunteers.

Lighting Designer: designs and plans the lighting colors and changes from scene to scene of the ballet. The Lighting Designer for *Nutcracker in Wonderland* is Jacob Edholm.

Projection Designer: designs the projections that complete the backdrop of *Nutcracker in Wonderland*. The Projection Designer is Brittany Merenda.

Choreographer: creates the movement and all dance sequences for the ballet. The choreographer of *Nutcracker in Wonderland* is Zoé Emilie Henrot.

Set and Prop Construction: A team of people who have built and acquired various props that are crucial to the story. This includes presents in the party scene, the heads worn by the rats, and the door of Clara's bedroom.

Crew: a team of stagehands backstage who help move the set, change lights, handle props, and assist the Stage Manager.

The Props

Props are an essential part of *Nutcracker in Wonderland*. They help the dancers tell their story and add to the look of the production. There are many props involved, including presents, a desk and chair, and a bike. However, there are four props in particular that are very important to the story. Keep reading more about these props below!

The *Wonderland* book: This book is from Clara's childhood. Once she rediscovers it, she can't put it down. Look for the book throughout the party scene. How is it different from Clara's other books? Clara falls asleep with the *Wonderland* book at her desk. Watch for it to reappear!

The Nutcracker: A gift from Patty that Clara grows to love very much. The nutcracker is also on Clara's desk when she falls asleep. Watch for him throughout the battle scene. How does he play a part in what happens to the Rat Queen? He also appears in Act 2. Look for him in *Wonderland*!

The door: Clara's bedroom door looks pretty ordinary at first. It glides across the stage and helps set the scene. However, this door is special...how does it change during the battle scene? Who comes through the door throughout the ballet? Watch closely at the end when Clara wakes up.

The rose: Drosselmeyer gives this red rose to Patty as part of his party tricks. What happens to the rose at the end of the party scene? Watch closely as it reappears later in the ballet.

Viewing Guide

What to look for:

- Unlike many *Nutcracker* productions, *Nutcracker in Wonderland* is set closer to present day rather than Victorian times. Look at the apparel of the party guests. Does it look like something you might wear? How are the dresses of Clara and Patty different from the rest of the dancers?
- The White Rabbit wears a classical tutu. This skirt is stiff and sticks straight out from the dancer's waist, highlighting her legs and allowing for freedom of movement. Tutus are usually handmade and can take hours and hours to create and embellish.
- Look for female dancers performing on the tips of their toes throughout the ballet. These dancers are wearing pointe shoes, which are specially made with a hardened tip and supportive sole. Pointe shoes are only worn after several years of ballet training. Traditionally, pointe shoes don't last very long, and may become soft and unsafe to wear in about a week. During the course of rehearsing for *Nutcracker in Wonderland*, company dancers used a total of around 60 pairs of shoes!
- Notice the headpieces worn by the Rat King and Queen and their children. The dancers have to practice with these headpieces a lot, as they need to angle their head down at all times to hide their own faces.
- Observe the door to Clara's bedroom. What happens to it once Drosselmeyer appears?
- Watch Clara's behavior and reactions in the battle scene. How does she seem to feel about the battle happening around her? How does her character change as she enters Wonderland?
- Observe the dancers portraying the Cheshire Cat and the White Rabbit. How do their movements reflect those of a cat or rabbit, and how do their costumes add to their overall appearance?
- Look at the beautiful projections behind the dancers. These special scenery pieces set the stage for Clara's story.
- The Queen of Hearts is dancing to the iconic music that usually belongs to the Sugar Plum Fairy. But does she look fairy-like? Does she seem nice? How does her movement reflect her character?
- The flowers have just finished dancing around Clara and Patty, but then someone else arrives on the scene. Who is it? What do they want? Where do Clara and Patty go after this guest interrupts them?
- When Clara wakes up, she is back at her desk. But what else is on her desk now that wasn't there before?

Listen for:

- The very first piece of music you will hear is called the overture. This music signifies the start of the show and plays while the curtain is still down. Tchaikovsky's overture is festive and meant to set the scene for the holiday party. During the overture, most of the dancers are behind the curtain getting to their places for the show to start! But notice what else happens during this opening scene. What does Clara rediscover thanks to Fritz's annoying behavior?
- Before Drosselmeyer enters the party, the music is lively and matches the skipping movement of the children dancing. Listen to how the music changes once Drosselmeyer enters- how does it sound different from what you've already heard?
- When Clara falls asleep, the music becomes dream-like. Listen for the sharp notes that signify the start of the battle scene.
- Listen for the chimes of the clock striking midnight, then watch what happens as the music resumes!
- Listen as the White Rabbit starts to perform. This piece of music, called Trepak by Tchaikovsky, is one of the most famous selections of music from his score for *The Nutcracker*. This music features the horn section of the orchestra, which builds the excitement and matches the energetic jumps and turns of the White Rabbit!
- Listen for a special instrument called a celeste while the Queen of Hearts is dancing. The celeste looks like a piano, but it creates a delicate twinkling sound.

Theater Etiquette:

- Arriving at the theater- It is important that you eat, drink, and use the restroom before entering the theater. Arriving late to the performance or getting up during the show disrupts the experience for other audience members. If you are late, please wait in the lobby and you will be taken to your seats during an appropriate moment in the performance.
- Cell phone use- turn off all cell phones or other devices that may sound during a performance.
- No photography or videography allowed- this is disruptive to audience members, and flash photography is dangerous for the dancers!
- Watching the show- please sit quietly in your seat and do not rest your feet on the seat in front of you. Talking is distracting, so save comments about the show for afterwards.
- Applaud! there are several instances where you can (and should) applaud. At the end of the show is always appropriate, but you can also clap after a dancer takes a bow during the performance to show your appreciation. Applause helps the dancers do an even better job, so show them that you are paying attention and like what you see by clapping!