

The Nutcracker Comes To Staller

Holiday Favorite Comes to USB for the Fifth Year in a Row

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Last Sunday, the Seiskaya Ballet performed The Nutcracker on Stony Brook's Staller Center stage. This performance was the second in a series of performances this season which marks a five year holiday tradition since its premiere, December 15, 1995.

The performance is a heartwarming reminder of the holiday spirit and it has become a staple of

the holiday season. Lead dancers, Lauren Menger and Amy Ruggiero said that they wanted their viewers to get into the holiday spirit. “We want the audience to go home and feel like Christmas,” they said.

The performance was marked by vivid colors that appeared on all the stage settings as well as on every performer's costume. Each dancer danced in lavishly colored satin and velvet cos-

tumes that shimmered and accented the dancing which was as vibrant as the costumes.

Impressive performances were given by Seiskaya's guest artist, Rasta Thomas, along with Sugar Plum Fairy, played by Amy Ruggiero. Thomas leapt into the air with muscular grace and performed with a charismatic stage presence. His reputation is well known for strength and versatility since his performance at the 1999 Academy Awards. Ruggiero was an equally aggressive stage presence with effortless turns and leg extensions that defied gravity. The two dancers were well paired with each other.

Judging by the excited chatter that filled the auditorium, the children of the audience, as well as their parents, enjoyed the famous scene where the Christmas tree soars to unexpected heights while Tchaikovsky's music fills the air. Each child sat on the edge of their seat to get a better view of the colorful spectacle. Another audience favorite was the courageous scene where Clara, played by Lisa Woods kills the Mouse King, performed by K. Brodie. After the scene, a disappointed child could be heard asking his mother, “Is it over?”

He was soon to find out that this was only the beginning of a series of spectacular and brilliant

scenes. Woods was convincing as a young girls on the verge of womanhood. She dance gracefully accompanied by Cory Stearns as the Nutcracker. The pair displayed their passion for dancing with fluid movements and radiance.

Other heartwarming scenes included those where the younger dancers got the chance to stretch their stage legs. The second act's acrobatic clowns, tail-wagging sheep and gliding angels delighted young and old alike. Despite the young age of these dancers, their talent was apparent.

Other impressive performances include Marlana Bono as Drosselmeyer's, played by Steve Marsh, life-sized windup doll, Julie Miller as the life-sized chocolate soldier. Bono's windup doll showed both robot-like as well as graceful qualities while Miller's chocolate soldier was enchanting and energetic.

Seiskaya Ballet's production of The Nutcracker was a captivating performance with an array of new up and coming talents. Each dancer their own abilities and character traits to add to the stage.

Upcoming Nutcracker performances are Saturday, December 16 at 1 and 7 PM and Sunday, December 17 and 1 and 6 PM. For more information, go to nutcrackerballet.com

