

# *the Nutcracker*

*30th Anniversary 1995-2024*



**SEISKAYA BALLET**



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# *the Nutcracker*

## *Casse Noisette*

Early in 1891 the legendary composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky received a commission from the Imperial Theatre Directorate at St. Petersburg to compose a one-act lyric opera together with a ballet for presentation during the following season. Accepting Tchaikovsky's choice of subject for the opera, the Theatre Directorate selected Alexandre Dumas' French adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* for the ballet.

Tchaikovsky was not pleased with the subject selection because he felt it did not lend itself to theatrical presentation and was therefore quite unsuited to serve as a scenario for a ballet. Both the opera and ballet were presented on December 18, 1892. The ballet, conducted by Riccardo Drigo, was received somewhat unfavorably. Dance historians have attributed this to the Nutcracker's unusual story, which was quite different from the romantic tales normally presented.

The Nutcracker choreography was begun by the redoubtable Marius Petipa. The balance of the work was taken up by his assistant, Leon Ivanov, when Petipa fell ill. According to historical accounts, when the ballet was finally produced, Petipa refused to have his name linked with it, feeling his own part in its creation was insufficient to be publicly announced. However, dance historians have recognized his contribution, and the original choreography is generally credited to both Petipa and Ivanov.

First presented in Western Europe by the Sadler's Wells Ballet at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, January 30, 1934, the production was staged by Nicholas Sergeyev after the original Petipa-Ivanov version. The first full-length American Nutcracker was produced by the San Francisco Ballet in 1944, with choreography by William Christensen.

Although constantly changing over its ninety-plus-year history, one of the landmark Nutcrackers was brought to the Metropolitan area in 1954 by the New York City Ballet with choreography by George Balanchine. Subsequent notable Nutcrackers have been choreographed and staged by Rudolf Nureyev, Royal Swedish Ballet (1967)

*Evangeline,  
We are so proud of you!  
Shine bright our  
little ballerina.*



*Love Always,  
Mommy, Daddy, Mason & Scarlett*



*May the joy and peace  
of Christmas be with you  
all through  
the New Year!*

*The Chen Family*





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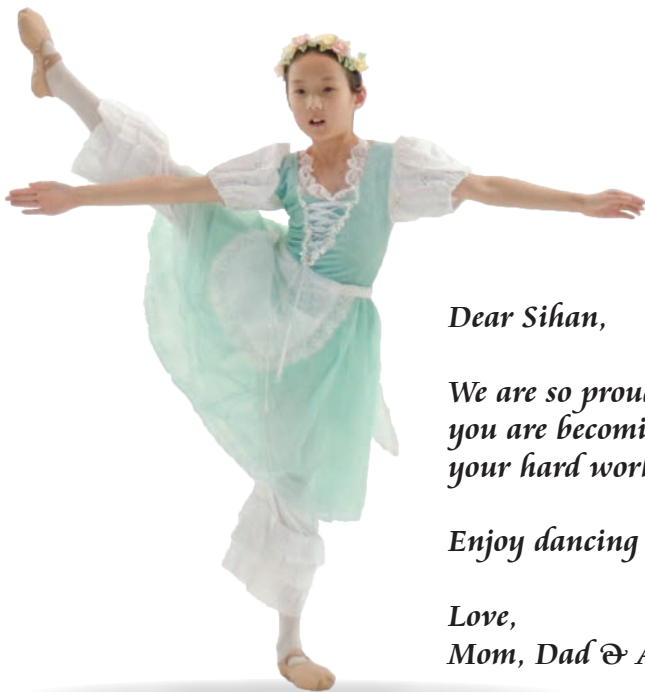
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you are becoming,  
your hard work and persistence!*

*Enjoy dancing and the show!*

*Love,  
Mom, Dad & Andy*



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and smiling!

Love,  
Your Entire Family



and England's Royal Ballet (1968), and Mikhail Baryshnikov, American Ballet Theatre (1976). With literally hundreds of productions nationwide, the Nutcracker has become the quintessential holiday classic, presented in theatrical productions on ice, on the dance stage and in the movies. This American holiday staple has also become an artistic lifeline, often providing over fifty percent of a dance company's annual ticket sales.

The basic libretto of the Nutcracker has as many interpretations as there are staged versions. The characters' names often change, and plot twists are added. The only constant is the music. Tchaikovsky's musical genius created one of the most recognizable and enduring scores ever written. An abbreviated version, the *Nutcracker Suite*, is one of the most recorded selections in classical repertoire. In the final analysis, it is the music that has truly given the Nutcracker a life of its own.

The Nutcracker is set in Western Europe during the 1800s. A doctor and town mayor, Hans Stahlbaum delights in holding large holiday gatherings for family and friends. His two children, Clara and Fritz, anxiously await the arrival of guests. The snow evokes a pleasantly festive atmosphere as the guests arrive. Tardy as always, Clara's godfather, Herr Drosselmeyer, arrives with special fanfare. He causes quite a stir and then mesmerizes and dazzles all onlookers with his exquisite mechanical dolls.

Presents are distributed to all the children, and Fritz receives a rocking hobby train. A bit jealous, Clara approaches Drosselmeyer for her gift. He teases her with a large mouse doll. Fritz pulls a baby mouse from the mother mouse's apron and sends Clara scampering. Drosselmeyer quickly makes amends and offers Clara an unusual prize, a colorful Nutcracker. Clara is instantly enthralled with the gift. Sibling rivalry takes hold, and in a tussle to wrest the Nutcracker away from Clara, Fritz breaks him. Drosselmeyer repairs the poor Nutcracker, but Clara is disappointed. He promises that all will be well.

Evening overtakes the party, and the guests depart. Clara is shooed to bed. Peace and quiet prevails in the Stahlbaum residency, or does it? Clara has awakened and, longing for her Nutcracker, comes back to the living room. She quickly finds her doll and falls asleep again. Thus begins





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the cast of the Nutcracker  
a very Merry Christmas*



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*+*  
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*From Jiang's Family*



*"Good luck to Olivia and Gigi  
on their first Nutcracker!"*



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her magical dream . . .

Thematically, Clara is cast as a mid-teen just blossoming into adulthood. She is young enough to display childlike emotions, yet mature enough to fantasize that a doll turned human can have idyllic qualities of heroism, selflessness, tenderness and a zest for adventure. Her attraction to the handsome Nutcracker is only natural; Clara has created him in her mind's eye. She has molded a doll into a living being, and a prince at that. Her devotion to the Nutcracker is symbolized by her brave effort to save him from being vanquished by the evil Mouse King. As the Nutcracker becomes more lifelike, the dream sequence carries her to a romantic interlude, a magical winter wonderland and an exotic garden in the Land of the Sweets.

The character of Drosselmeyer has almost endless possibilities. The Seiskaya version adopts the characterization of him as Clara's godfather, who is an eccentric maker of magnificent mechanical toys. A widower with no children of his own, he delights in teasing and pleasing his only godchild. Drosselmeyer's relationship to the Nutcracker is simply that of an artisan. Clara's dream vision of Drosselmeyer is an expression of her affection for him and an extension of the attributes she sees in him.

The Nutcracker presents two major ensemble dances: the Dance of the Snowflakes and the Dance of the Flowers. One of the strengths of the Seiskaya Company has always been ensemble segments. Nowhere is this more evident than in these dances. Flowing lines, exact patterns and intricate interplay between corps and soloists are the hallmark of the choreography.

Cyril W. Beaumont, the noted dance critic, historian and author, panned the original 1934 British version of the Nutcracker: "The final scene is merely an excuse for the traditional series of character dances which, in this instance, are seldom appropriate to the situation and, generally speaking, are of indifferent quality." History has proven that even a revered critic like Mr. Beaumont can be wrong. The Second Act has long been considered the ballet's highlight. The Seiskaya version of the Land of the Sweets, Act II, reaffirms the classical approach. The scene opens with the Sugar Plum Fairy surrounded by a host of



*Merry Christmas  
The Caraiani Family*

*Congratulations Olivia!*

*Happy Holidays  
From the Spataro Family*



Dear Julianna,  
Congratulations on your first Nutcracker performance!



Love,  
Mommy, Daddy,  
Joey & Gavin



Congratulations Sterling — and to the whole  
Seiskaya Community!



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angels, followed by the entrance of her court, and the arrival of a nutshell boat with Clara and the Nutcracker. The members of the Sugar Plum's court represent many lands, as well as characters, from children's fairy tales. The couple is presented with sweets and delicacies from around the world. The Nutcracker tells of his valiant struggle against the Mouse King and Clara's heroic efforts. Clara's dream at this juncture takes on a "sugar and spice and everything nice" tone. Seiskaya's unusual choreographic adaptations frame the character ballet dances with a unique quality.

Beaumont was a lot more generous in his opinion of the Dance of the Snowflakes and, in particular, the Sugar Plum Pas de Deux: "...there are three beautiful 'classical numbers' - the *pas de deux* danced by the Sugar-Plum Fairy and her Cavalier, the latter's *variation*, and the '*Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy*.'" Seiskaya's rendition of this famous pas de deux matches the elegance, beauty and charisma of Seiskaya Ballet principals Madeleine Martufi, Kaede Urso and Michaela Lettiere with guest artist David Wright's consummate artistry. About the pas de deux it can be said, "We saved the best for last."



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Mom and Dad*

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&  
Happy New Year*







Guest  
Artist

**David Wright** from Indianapolis, Indiana started his training under his mother at the age of 5. At the age of 18 he decided to take his classical dance training to the next level and enrolled at Indiana Ballet Conservatory under the direction of Alyona Yakovleva-Randall. Upon graduating David was offered a 2nd company position with Orlando Ballet 2 and a year afterwards was offered a company position with Orlando Ballet. After 3 seasons of performing in the Central Florida area David was offered a contract with Dance Theatre of

Harlem. Currently in his third season with the company David has had the privilege of performing works by Nacho Duato, William Forsythe, George Balanchine, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, and Helen Pickett. Since being with the company David has had the amazing opportunity of touring with the company extensively around the country as well as the the honor of performing in Canada, Mexico, and China. He will be performing the dual roles of *Cavalier* and *Nutcracker*. As *Cavalier*, he will perform opposite all three Seiskaya Ballet Principal Dancers, who are each accomplished dancers, with quite different styles. David enjoys the challenge.

With her exquisite musicality and effervescent stage presence, Madeleine is proof that hard work is the manifestation of perseverance. This *Nutcracker* season, **Principal Dancer Madeleine Martufi** will grace the stage with her musicality and artistry. She will be reprising her role as the *Sugar Plum Fairy*, showcasing her athleticism and elegance. Madeleine will again also be performing the roles of both *Clara* and *Dew Drop*, highlighting her



gorgeous lines and her emotive acting. Madeleine's exquisite technique and powerful turns are not to be missed as she delights the audience with her charismatic stage presence. In BESFI 2023, she embodied a joyful maiden in the *William Tell Pas De Deux* opposite guest artist Francis Lawrence. For BESFI 2024, Madeleine imparts her talent to the high-spirited *Flames of Paris Pas De Deux*; she will then display her dynamic port de bras and elegance as *Maiden Fair* in **Mask**. Madeleine strives to pursue a career in ballet. A multi-talented performer, Madeleine is also an accomplished musician and a NYSSMA Level 6 soloist. She has also received the honor of being invited to participate in the annual SCMEA and LISFA ensembles for violin. Madeleine's hard work in the studio will be evident as she performs with hard-earned stamina and unflinching strength.





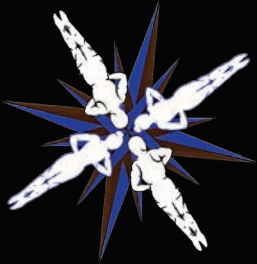
*Happy Holidays and  
Peace on Earth to All*

*Best Wishes,  
The Peter Gwiazda Family*

- Ava,

*Congratulations on your first  
Seiskaya Nutcracker. We are  
so proud of your hard work and  
dedication.*

*Love,  
Mom, Dad, Logan & Jake*



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*Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year*

*The Li Family*





Seiskaya Ballet's **Principal Dancer Kaede Urso**, known for her rock-steady turns and high-energy jumps, combines grace, elegance and poise. Her roles as the jaunty *Chocolate Soldier*, a majestic *Flower Soloist* and an enchanting *Chinese* dancer, are some of the most demanding roles in the Seiskaya repertoire. Kaede started dancing at an early age performing as an *Angel* in her first year of the **Nutcracker**.

After years of honing her technique and artistry, Kaede assended to the role of *Sugar Plum Fairy* in **Nutcracker 2023** showcasing dazzling partnering sequences with the *Cavalier* while the couple flawlessly performed the *Grand Pas de Deux* which is the pinnacle of the show. For BESFI 2024, she danced the *Black Swan* variation from the ballet **Swan Lake** and earned accolades for the role of *Moody* in **Mask**. She will again dance the *Sugar Plum Fairy* this **Nutcracker** season reuniting with Guest Artist David Wright further highlighting their respective technical mastery. Along with revisiting the of roles *Chinese*, *Chocolate Soldier*, *A Friend of Clara*, *Flower Soloist* and *Snowflake*, she is adding the role of *Doll* with its mechanical contrivances. Kaede is a dedicated leader in her school and community. She is a Student Government class representative, Honor Student, and Key Club member. Kaede has also received the Girl Scout Bronze and Silver Awards, along with the Presidential Volunteer Award for the past five years. She enjoys doing community service. Fearless on and off the stage, Kaede is a volunteer firefighter as well.

Known for her exceptional prowess in turns and jumps, her technique is matched only by her emotive storytelling and stage presence. With a repertoire as diverse as it is impressive, **Principal Dancer Michaela Lettiere's** vivaciousness and talent illuminate every stage. In the enchanting **2023 Nutcracker**, she mesmerized audiences with her inaugural portrayal of *Clara*, infusing the role with the innocence of a child and the wonderment of a teen enthralled



with the romance of a fantasy crush. Her performances in *Chinese*, a duet of mirror images requiring high ballon and synchronized turns, was riveting. As a *Flower Soloist* she showcased her versatility and flair, while her renditions of the rambunctious *Fritz* and steadfast *Chocolate Soldier* dazzled with precision and poise highlighting Michaela's intricate fouetté turns and robust technique. Reprising her role as the delicate *Dew Drop*, her high leg extensions and assured turns were exhibited. In the 2024 BESFI performance, she enchanted once more taking on the iconic roles of the enigmatic *Esmeralda* and *Narcissist* in **Mask** with her trademark elegance and passion. For this year's **Nutcracker**, Michaela embraced the role of *Sugar Plum Fairy* and will captivate audiences with her regal presence and technical brilliance. Yet, her ambitions extend beyond the stage, as she harbors aspirations of becoming a pediatric trauma surgeon, driven by her innate desire to help children. For Michaela, ballet isn't just a passion, it's a discipline that fosters resilience, determination, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

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# Other Featured Performers



## Guest Artists and First Soloists



### **Dr. Sergey Butkevich, Guest Artist**

Role: *Herr Drosselmeyer*

An academically decorated Mathematician and a Researcher for a quantitative investment fund company, Sergey inspires the question, why take on the challenge of the eccentric, yet nurturing, *Drosselmeyer*? Very simply, Sergey loves the arts! He is also a member of the Staller Center Advisory Board.



### **Jacqueline Kalata (Juana Cala'), Guest Artist**

Role: *Spanish - Choreographer and Performer*

Receiving all her ballet training at Seiskaya Ballet, Jacqueline was also introduced to Spanish Dance which became her passion. Off to Spain to study, she embarked on a lifelong career as a Flamenco dancer touring the United States and performing in Italy for 19 years with her own Flamenco company.



### **Jayne Levy, Guest Artist**

Roles: *Mouse King*

A mainstay in Seiskaya Ballet's *Nutcracker* since 2010, Jayne Levy has acquitted her role as the fearsome *Mouse King* with panache. Donning a regal red robe, the *Mouse King* has valiantly duelled with ABT's Cory Stearns, NYCB's Stephen Hanna and Cincinnati Ballet's Daniel Wagner among others.



### **Brianna Jimenez, Guest, Former Principal**

Roles: *Dew Drop, Friend of Clara, Chinese, Flower Soloist*

Majoring in dance at Fordham University, Brianna will again capture audiences with her classical lines, blistering allegro and ethereal grace. She received accolades for her performance in the *Sugar Plum Pas de Deux* opposite Max Lippman in 2022. When Brianna performs, it is a treat for all!



### **Eva Pyrros, Guest, Former Principal**

Roles: *Snow Queen, Doll, Friend of Clara, Flower Soloist*

Whether a role calls for virtuoso technique or graceful épaulement, Eva is always up to the challenge. An excellent teacher and coach who mentors young dancers, she leads by example. Ever versatile, she will perform a plethora of roles. Eva continues to be a Staller Center audience favorite.





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*Let the Magic begin*





*The Butkevich Family*



### **Diana Atoian, Guest, Former Principal**

**Roles:** *Chinese, Friend of Clara, Flower Soloist, Snow*  
A masterful technician, leader and instructor to the students at Seiskaya Ballet, this Nutcracker season Diana lends her talent to this year's cast. Revered as "A dancer whose confidence and bravura precedes her," Diana's mark will be forever etched at Seiskaya and in the hearts of audiences.



### **Lara Caraianni, Guest, Former Principal**

**Roles:** *Chinese, Friend of Clara, Flower Soloist, Snow*  
Lara is beautifully poised, technically strong, with elegance and an illuminating stage presence, qualities she tries to imbue to her Seiskaya students. She will be showcasing her grace and impressive leaps as a *Friend of Clara* and displaying her fluid lines in both the *Snow* and *Flower* corps.



### **Maya Butkevich, Guest, Former Principal**

**Roles:** *Clara, Dew Drop, Flower Soloist, Snow*  
Maya is currently an undergraduate student at Boston University pursuing a double major in Marine Biology and Ocean Engineering. As a former Principal dancer, she performed as the *Sugar Plum, Clara* and *Dew Drop* to rousing applause and will reprise the roles of *Clara* and *Dew Drop* this season.



### **Nicole Difiore, Guest, Former Principal**

**Roles:** *Snow and Flower*  
A vaunted performer during her student years, Nicole also distinguished herself as a ballet teacher and mentor. Her wide ranging repertoire and communication skills elevated many of her protégés to new heights. Always a ready coach, Nicole has been an indispensable aid in staging *Snow* for this season.



### **Jenna Lee Guest, Former Principal**

**Roles:** *Chocolate Soldier, Flower Soloist, Friend of Clara*  
An alumnus of Sacred Heart University's Dance Company, Jenna will leap to celestial heights, complemented by precise Baryshnikov sweeping turns, in the role dearest to her, *Chocolate Soldier*. A dancer with great versatility and range, she's been regaled as a "...dynamic, ..thoughtful dancer."



### **Natasha Butkevich, Guest, Former 1<sup>st</sup> Soloist**

**Roles:** *Snow Queen, Doll, Friend of Clara*  
Natasha will once again captivate the audience when she reprises her roles of *Snow Queen, Doll, Friend of Clara* and *Flower Soloist*. She has impeccable lines, a graceful stage presence, and then there's her feet - perfectly arched, perfectly pointed, and perfectly placed, perfect in every performance!



## Peter Gwiazda, Guest Artist

Roles: *Chocolate Soldier*, *Chinese*, *Friend of Fritz*, *Clown*  
This **Nutcracker** season, Peter is proud to rejoin the Seiskaya family. His prodigious turns and jumps are products of his years of training. He will be reprising his role as the *Chocolate Soldier*. In Act II Peter will again regail us by performing en pointe in the role of *Chinese*.



## Sara Li, 1<sup>st</sup> Soloist

Roles: *Bo Peep*, *Friend of Clara*, *Arabian & Flower Soloist*  
With dazzling arabesques and impeccable turns, Sara will captivate the Staller audience in the roles of *Bo Beep*, *Flower Soloist*, and *Arabian Soloist*. Always a standout, she will be center stage for the intricate *Friends of Clara Ensemble* as well as a delicate *Snowflake* in *Snow*.



## Molly Murray, 1<sup>st</sup> Soloist

Roles: *Snow Queen*, *Chocolate Soldier*, *Doll*, *Chinese*  
Completing her second year at Seiskaya Ballet, Molly will be showcasing her explosive jumps, high leg extensions and multiple turns as the elegant *Snow Queen*, ebullient *Chocolate Soldier*, wind-up mechanical *Doll* and as one of a pair of dancers in the jaunty *Chinese* duet.



## Jillian Rabbitt, 1<sup>st</sup> Soloist

Roles: *Chocolate Soldier*, *Flower & Arabian Soloist*, *Snow*  
A flexible dancer with a dedication to ballet, Jillian is thrilled for another magical year of the **Nutcracker**. Making her debut in multiple challenging roles, the audience is sure to love her powerful rendition of the *Chocolate Soldier*; her musicality as a *Flower Soloist* and her grace as a *Friend of Clara and Fritz*.



## Averì Savino, 1<sup>st</sup> Soloist

Roles: *Snow Queen*, *Doll*, *Flower & Arabian Soloist*  
Add to the foregoing roles a mischievous *Mouse Soloist* and several performances in the *Flower* ensemble and you can cap off a long journey from an ethereal little *Angel*. From the delicate synchronized movements of *Arabian* to the jaunty *Trepak*, Averì's musicality and energy shine through.



## Sterling Carter, 1<sup>st</sup> Soloist

Roles: *Bo Peep*, *Friend of Clara*, *Arabian & Flower Soloist*  
With sinewy arms and long graceful lines, Sterling personifies the elegance of a ballet dancer. She will delight audiences as the ever watchful *Bo Peep* and the alluring *Arabian Soloist*. Performing with ethereal essence as a *Flower Soloist* and *Snowflake*, Sterling deftly juxtaposes the rascally role of a *Friend of Fritz*.





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**Wishing all Nutcracker families a joyful holiday season!**

**Lovingly, Mom, Dad, and Granny**

*Richard Goelz*

*William Pittenger*

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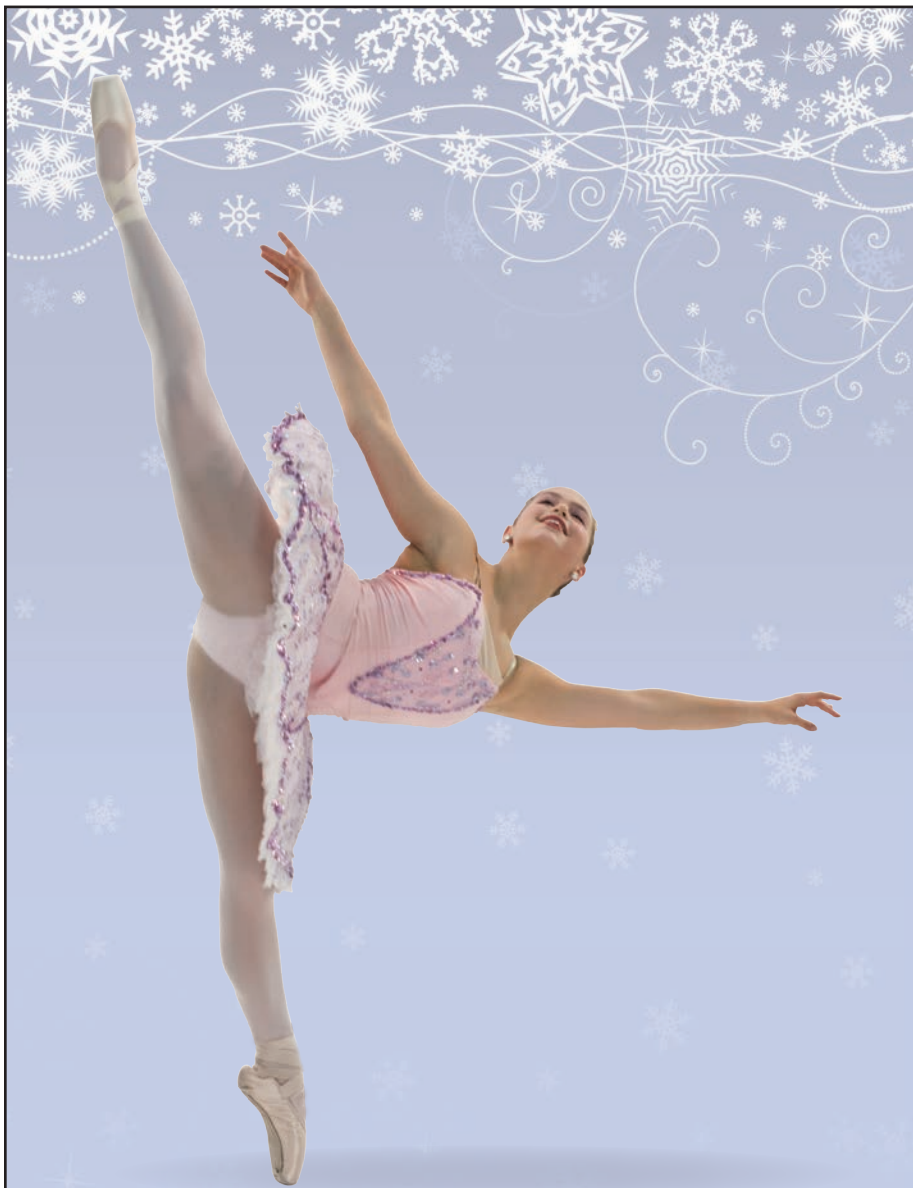
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Merry Christmas



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# *Nutcracker 2024*

Premiere December 15, 1995

<i>Composer</i>	<i>Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky</i>
<i>Choreographer</i>	<i>Valia Seiskaya</i>
<i>Set &amp; Scenery Designer</i>	<i>Margaret Piotrowska</i>
<i>Costume Mistress</i>	<i>Andrea Savino</i>
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	<i>Elizabeth Silver</i>
<i>Rehearsal Mistresses</i>	<i>Eva Pyrros, Diana Atoian, Lara Caraiani</i>
<i>Stage Manager</i>	<i>Elizabeth Silver</i>

## **GUEST ARTISTS (SEE BIO PAGES ALSO)**

*David Wright*

### **PRINCIPALS**

<i>Madeleine Martufi</i>	<i>Kaede Urso</i>	<i>Michaela Lettiere</i>
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### **ACT I**

#### ***In order of appearance:***

*Herr Drosselmeyer: S. Butkevich*

*Drosselmeyer's Assistant: C. Babich*

*Clara: M. Martufi, M. Lettiere, M. Butkevich*

*Fritz: I. Caston, G. Chen, L. Doran, O. Spataro*

*Herr and Frau Stahlbaum: C. Carter and D. Lettiere*

#### **Guests at Party**

<i>L. Atoian</i>	<i>G. Carter</i>	<i>C. Doran</i>	<i>J. Doran</i>
<i>J. Savino</i>	<i>HP. Wei</i>	<i>Hs. Wei</i>	<i>T. Wei</i>

#### **Children at Party**

<i>F. Airola</i>	<i>I. Caston</i>	<i>G. Chen</i>	<i>V. Choi</i>
<i>E. Correia</i>	<i>L. Doran</i>	<i>L. Ferrara</i>	<i>J. Gnolfo</i>
<i>A. Huang</i>	<i>M. Jiang</i>	<i>A. Li</i>	<i>E. Li</i>
<i>C. Lioudakis</i>	<i>G. Malm</i>	<i>G. Milano</i>	<i>A. Perez-Canoa</i>
<i>I. Rubio</i>	<i>Ar. Savino</i>	<i>L. Shrestha</i>	<i>C. Sorahan</i>
<i>O. Spataro</i>	<i>S. Tang</i>	<i>A. Tsantes</i>	<i>J. Tuthill</i>
<i>J. Zarcone</i>	<i>M. Zhang</i>	<i>N. Zhang</i>	<i>K. Zhao</i>

#### **Friends of Clara and Fritz**

<i>D. Atoian</i>	<i>M. Butkevich</i>	<i>N. Butkevich</i>	<i>L. Caraiani</i>
<i>S. Carter</i>	<i>N. Hateau</i>	<i>B. Jimenez</i>	<i>J. Kirwan</i>
<i>S. Li</i>	<i>A. Lioudaki</i>	<i>M. Martufi</i>	<i>M. Murray</i>

(cont'd)

A ballerina in a pink tutu is captured in a high arabesque pose, balancing on her right leg with her left leg extended vertically. She is smiling and looking to the right. The background is a deep blue, framed by intricate white floral and scrollwork patterns. The text is written in a white, elegant cursive font.

*Congratulations  
to the 2024  
Cast of the  
Nutcracker*

*With love,  
The Martufis*



*Merry Christmas*  
*The Berti Family*

*Our best wishes to*  
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**Friends of Clara and Fritz (cont.)**

*E. Pyrros*      *J. Rabbitt*      *Av. Savino*      *K. Urso*  
*Ja. Wei*      *Jo. Wei*      *N. Zhang*

**Butlers:** *C. Babich, S. Shrestha*

**Doll:** *N. Butkevich, S. Li, M. Murray, Av. Savino, K. Urso*

**Chocolate Soldier:** *P. Gwiazda, M. Murray, J. Rabbitt, K. Urso*

**Nutcracker:** *D. Wright*

**Mouse King:** *J. Levy*

**Mice (\*Soloists)**

*D. Atoian*      *A. Carter\**      *P. Gwiazda\**      *N. Hateau\**  
*J. Kirwan*      *A. Lioudaki*      *C. Lioudakis*      *A. Mancini*  
*A. Perez-Canoa\** *Av. Savino*      *E. Tramontana*      *Ja. Wei\**  
*Jo. Wei*      *N. Zhang*      *S. Zhong*

**Soldiers**

*F. Airola*      *I. Caston*      *G. Chen*      *V. Choi*  
*E. Correia*      *L. Doran*      *J. Gnoflo*      *A. Huang*  
*A. Li*      *E. Li*      *E. Luo*      *G. Milano*  
*Ar. Savino*      *L. Shrestha*      *C. Sorahan*      *O. Spataro*  
*S. Tang*      *A. Tsantes*      *J. Tuthill*      *J. Zarcone*  
*K. Zhao*

**Cavalry (\*Captain):** *D. Correia, A. Gnoflo\*, A. Tuthill,*  
*A. Tramontana, E. Yu*

**Snow Queen:** *N. Butkevich, S. Li, M. Murray, E. Pyrros, Av. Savino*

**Snowflakes**

*D. Atoian*      *M. Butkevich*      *N. Butkevich*      *L. Caraiani*  
*S. Carter*      *N. DiFiore*      *N. Hateau*      *B. Jimenez*  
*J. Kirwan*      *S. Li*      *A. Lioudaki*      *M. Martufi*  
*M. Murray*      *E. Pyrros*      *J. Rabbitt*      *Av. Savino*  
*K. Urso*      *Ja. Wei*      *Jo. Wei*

==== **Intermission** ====

**ACT II**

**Sugar Plum**

*M. Martufi*      *K. Urso*      *M. Lettiere*

**Angels**

*F. Airola*      *I. Caston*      *E. Correia*      *G. Milano*  
*L. Shrestha*      *C. Sorahan*      *S. Tang*      *A. Tsantes*  
*J. Tuthill*      *J. Zarcone*

## ACT II (cont.)

**Spanish Dancer:** J. Kalata

### Arabian Dancers (\*Soloists)

S. Carter*	N. Hateau*	B. Jimenez*	J. Kirwan
S. Li*	A. Lioudaki	A. Mancini	M. Murray
E. Pyrros*	J. Rabbitt*	Av. Savino*	Ja. Wei
Jo. Wei			

**Chinese:** D. Atoian, L. Caraiani, P. Gwiazda, B. Jimenez,  
M. Murray, K. Urso

**Trepak:** A. Carter, G. Chen, L. Doran, A. Mancini,  
E. Tramontana, E. Yu, N. Zhang

**Cossack:** E. Tramontana, P. Gwiazda, A. Mancini

**Bo Peep:** S. Carter, S. Li, A. Lioudaki, M. Murray, J. Rabbitt

**Sheep:** A. Carter, I. Caston, G. Chen, L. Doran, A. Huang, A. Li,  
E. Li, Ar. Savino, C. Sorahan, O. Spataro, S. Zhong

**Lamb Chop:** M. Jiang

**Mother Ginger:** L. Atoian

### Polichinelles

I. Caston	G. Chen	E. Correia	J. Gnolfo
A. Huang	A. Li	E. Li	C. Lioudakis
E. Luo	Ar. Savino	L. Shrestha	C. Sorahan
O. Spataro	S. Tang	K. Zhao	S. Zhong

### Clowns

P. Gwiazda	G. Sangiorgi	B. Wing
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**Dew Drop:** M. Lettiere, M. Butkevich, B. Jimenez, M. Martufi

### Flowers (\*Soloists)

D. Atoian*	M. Butkevich	N. Butkevich*	L. Caraiani*
A. Carter	S. Carter	N. DiFiore	N. Hateau
B. Jimenez	J. Kirwan	S. Li*	A. Lioudaki
M. Murray*	A. Perez-Canoa	E. Pyrros	J. Rabbitt*
Ar. Savino	Av. Savino*	K. Urso*	Ja. Wei
Jo. Wei	N. Zhang		

**Cavalier:** David Wright

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Merry Christmas to All!*

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Mom and Dad*



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# *Autographs*



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Congratulations to the  
2024 Nutcracker cast  
and crew!

Happy Holidays!  
The James Family



Congratulations Adair — and to the whole  
Seiskaya Community!



CARTER DESIGN



## VALIA SEISKAYA



Russian-born Valia Seiskaya took her first ballet lessons in Greece at the age of six. Her teacher was Adam Morianoff, also a Russian *émigré*. (Valia was experiencing difficulty learning Greek; thus, it was natural for her mother to seek out a fellow countryman.) At nine she became a scholarship student, showing prodigious technique—for example, *entrechat huit*, eight beats, in centre—by age ten. *Pointe* work also started at ten, character ballet at twelve. Thereafter, Mme. Seiskaya rapidly developed the combination of strong technique and high elevation which would become her hallmark

as a professional.

At fifteen, Valia continued her training under Sonia Morianova, the niece of Adam Morianoff, who had recently retired from the National Opera of Greece. She became a member of the National Opera at seventeen, soon attaining the rank of featured soloist, and touring Europe and Russia with the company. At the National Theater her preparation continued under resident ballet masters and choreographers, including the Bolshoi's Asaf Messerer, Boris Kniazev, Nina Kyrsanova and Olympia Yelodari (former judge at the *International Ballet Competitions* held in Varna, Bulgaria and Moscow).

In Greece, as in most European countries, ballet students wishing to become professionals must pass comprehensive national level examinations and obtain a license. Mme. Seiskaya has fulfilled all her requirements and has been granted both a diploma and a license.

The Seiskaya Ballet School was founded in 1974, one year after Mme. Seiskaya retired from the National Opera of Greece. At that time she taught all fifteen class sections. In 1976 Studio A was doubled in size to its present 2,500 square feet, and in 1981 Studio B was opened, adding another 1,500 square feet to the dance facility. That year also saw the establishment of the Seiskaya Ballet Academy.

Seiskaya Ballet School continues to be one of the premier institutions of its kind, offering classical and character ballet for the non-career-oriented dancer. The School offers an open-class format, where students are encouraged to explore fulfillment through dance. Expanded in September 2007, the School was supplanted by OPEN which provides pre-Academy and adult



*Dear Jasmine and Josephine –  
We are so proud of the perseverance  
you have shown and the progress that  
you have made in the past year.  
Wish you will have fun and get  
inspiration at the Nutcracker.*

*Love,  
Dad, Mom and Tom*



*May this season and  
the year ahead be filled with  
beauty, laughter, and dreams  
coming true.*

*The Li Family*

*Congratulations to Alice.  
Starting pointe work in the first year is such an exciting milestone.  
Wishing you continued joy and success in the New Year.*





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classes, utilizing the Academy staff and facilities.

The Seiskaya Ballet Academy is designed as a professional training program for serious dancers who display the determination, physical attributes and musicality of the career-oriented dancer. Admission to the Academy is by audition only. Since the inception of the Seiskaya Ballet programs, over seventy students have opted for professional careers.

All Seiskaya students are encouraged to participate in the guest teacher and summer workshop programs offered by the Ballet Education and Scholarship Fund, Inc. (BESFI). As part of their professional preparation, Academy students' participation in auditions for company schools and major dance companies are routinely encouraged.

Seiskaya students have compiled an outstanding record of achievement. Through the years, full scholarships have been awarded by every major institution for which they have auditioned, including schools affiliated with American Ballet Theatre and the New York City, San Francisco, Houston, Joffrey, Pacific Northwest, Pittsburgh, Miami, and Boston Ballets. Some of the numerous dance companies Seiskaya students have joined: American Ballet Theatre (5), Boston Ballet (2), Atlanta Ballet (2), Ballet West, Ballet Memphis, Ballet Austin, State Ballet of Missouri, and Milwaukee (3), Eliot Feld, Fort Worth, New Jersey, Pacific Northwest, Pittsburgh, Royal Swedish, Tennessee, Louisville and Tulsa Ballets (2).

In 1994 Seiskaya student Michael Cusumano captured a bronze medal and Special Commendation at the *International Ballet Competition (IBC)* in Varna, Bulgaria and a coveted Jury Award (a gold medal-level award) at the *Prix de Danse*, Paris, France. Valia Seiskaya was nominated that year as the Best Teacher and Coach at Varna, one of the few Americans ever to be so honored.

In 1996 Kirov student Rasta Thomas, coached by Valia Seiskaya, reached the pinnacle: a gold medal in the Men's Junior Division at the *17th IBC*, Varna, Bulgaria. Incredibly, he was the first American male dancer ever to win a Junior Division gold and the youngest male dancer ever to do so. In addition, his triumph ended a sixteen-year stretch in which no gold medal was awarded in the Junior Men's Division.

In 1998 Seiskaya student Elizabeth McGrath established herself as one of America's potential stars. She represented the U.S. in the *18th IBC* in Varna, Bulgaria distinguishing herself by advancing to the semifinal round. In late

Natalie,

We are so proud of your hard work and dedication!

Have a good time and enjoy the journey too!

Love you,

- Mom, Dad and Marcus





*“Dance is the joy of movement  
and the heart of life.”*

*Congratulations to Lilah  
and  
the entire cast of the Nutcracker.*

*Love,  
Mom, Dad, Charlotte, Gabe,  
Grandma, Grandpa, Oma & Opa*

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'98, she was a top finalist in the *8th Concours International de Danse de Paris*, France and won double gold at the inaugural YAGP. In 2009 Anna Craddock captured the Grand Prize in the *9th Hellas International Dance Competition* and in 2011 garnered 1st place in the American Ballet Competition in Texas.

Additional exemplary efforts in the international arena include those by Alexandra Kastrinos, Allison Wade, Eileen Houghton, Johanna Hsu, Sophie Vanier, Amy Wilks, Karen Lynch, and Lesli Lyon. Seiskaya students have captured more than twenty national and regional awards, including those from the National Arts and Letters Competition; National Arts Recognition and Talent Competition (Presidential Scholar in the Arts); Saraband, Ltd.; the Amilita Hoffman Memorial Ballet Competition and American Ballet Competition.

During her 17-year professional career with the National Opera of Greece, Mme. Seiskaya gained an affinity for the grand sweep of story-line ballets and operas staged by the company. Her own choreographic works reflect that interest, such as: **Street People**, **Las Damiselas**, **Forest**, **MASK**, and the **Nutcracker**. Fresh interpretations of classical favorites **La Boutique Fantasque**, **Walpurgis Night** and **A Night on Bald Mountain** complement her signature ensemble works **Grand Waltz**, **Seasons** and **Dance of the Hours**.

Valia Seiskaya is listed in **Who's Who Among Outstanding Americans**, was The Village Times 1985 Woman of the Year in the Arts and was elected to the Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame in 2011. She has received commendations from President Reagan, Governor Pataki and Congressman Forbes.

Embarking on its 30th anniversary season, the Seiskaya **Nutcracker** has established itself as the premier event of its kind on Long Island. Total cumulative attendance has eclipsed 125,000.

## Procedural Notes

**LATECOMERS will be seated at appropriate intervals in the program as predetermined by Seiskaya Ballet and the theater's management. Viewing monitors are available in the lobby for those awaiting seating.**

**SOUND RECORDINGS, VIDEO-TAPING AND/OR PHOTOGRAPHING of any performance without written permission of the management is forbidden by law.**

**DOCTORS who expect to be called during a performance may give their pager/seat number to an usher who will notify the House Manager.**

**NO FOOD OR BEVERAGES are permitted in the theater.**

**SMOKING is strictly prohibited.**

**Please note that you must comply with all New York State Covid-19 guidelines including wearing a mask at all times while inside the venue.**

*"Dance is an art, paint your dream and follow it."*

*Julia,*

*We are so proud of your hard work and dedication.  
Congratulations on your performance!  
We love you so much!*

*Love, Mommy, Daddy, Henry and Isabella*



We are still working to put together BESFI's Spring Performances. The program will feature a one-act ballet, vibrant character dances plus an exciting series of pas de deux. Guest Artists, show times and particulars will be forthcoming. Although the performing venue may change, the excitement and challenges attached to each set of performances will continue and provide ample opportunity for dancers to stretch their abilities. To join our mailing list, call **631-584-0192**, email us at [seiskaya@aol.com](mailto:seiskaya@aol.com) or write: **Seiskaya Ballet, 7 Flowerfield Suite 16, St. James, New York 11780**. Auditions for the Seiskaya Ballet Academy are available throughout the year by making an audition reservation at the above phone number. Applicants must be properly attired, with females, if applicable, requiring pointe shoes. A non-refundable audition charge of \$30.00 will be collected at the time of the audition.

The **2025 BESFI Intensive Summer Workshop** will be held from July 7th through August 15th. The program will continue the two division format which allows students flexibility in scheduling and is an alternative to sleepaway camps. As always, an outstanding teaching staff will be featured. In its nearly 40 years, the workshop has attracted such noted instructors as Andre Kramarevsky, Jurgen Schneider, Luis Fuente, Marianna Tcherkassky, Eleanor D'Antuono, Lupe Serrano, Marjorie Tallchief and Cynthia Harvey. When available, students may opt for an abbreviated schedule or simply pay by the class. Class placement priority is given to students attending the entire program. If funds are available, scholarships will be available through an open competition, date to be announced. Details will be available on request by writing BESFI, P.O. Box 2146, St. James, New York 11780 or by visiting [www.besfi.com](http://www.besfi.com).

# BESFI 2025

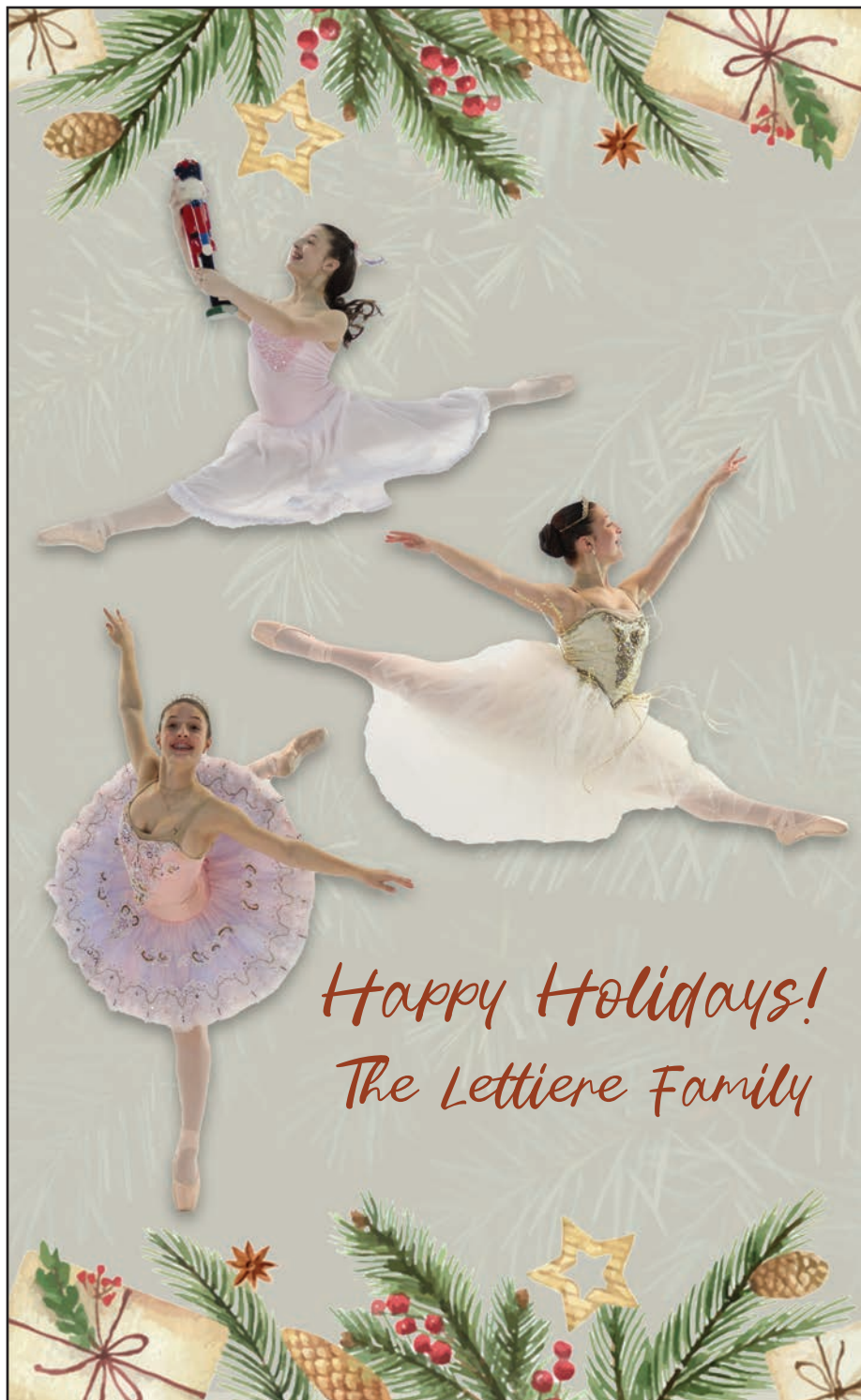
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<b>Five Weeks</b>	<b>\$2,250</b>	<b>\$1,700</b>
<b>Four Weeks</b>	<b>\$1,875</b>	<b>\$1,400</b>
<b>Three Weeks</b>	<b>\$1,475</b>	<b>\$1,100</b>
<b>Two Weeks</b>	<b>\$1,050</b>	<b>\$775</b>
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*Happy Holidays!*  
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*Jessica,*

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performance in the Nutcracker!*

*Love,  
Mom, Dad and Allie*



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<b><i>Nutcracker Webmaster</i></b>	<i>Karin Engel</i>
<b><i>Rehearsal Assistants</i></b>	<i>Madeleine Martufi, Michaela Lettiere, Kaede Urso</i>
<b><i>Costume Mistress</i></b>	<i>Andrea Savino</i>
<b><i>Costume Design &amp; Execution</i></b>	<i>Kathy Baker, Birgitta Bergeman, Ronni Camhi, Sue DiFiore, Karen Kralik, Kathi Kwiecinski, Vaso Mavrianos, Laura Schifano, Caroline Wilks</i>
<b><i>Costume Detailing</i></b>	<i>Lara Caraiani, Genevieve Carter, Diana Correia, Sue DiFiore, Nicole DiFiore, Cara Doran, Johanna Hsu, Dani Lettiere, Katherine Lioudaki, Eva Pyrros, Hsin Wei, Nicole Zarcone</i>
<b><i>Audio Recording Engineer</i></b>	<i>Andrew Nittoli</i>
<b><i>Sculptures/Art Work</i></b>	<i>Matt Targon/Bill Meehan</i>
<b><i>Props Manager</i></b>	<i>Sampurna Shrestha</i>
<b><i>Green Room Supervisors</i></b>	<i>Katherine Lioudaki, Betsy Hateau, Michelle Martufi</i>
<b><i>Gifts</i></b>	<i>Athena Diamond</i>
<b><i>Scenery Painted by</i></b>	<i>Scenic Art Studios, Inc., Norwalk, CT</i>
<b><i>Scenery Design Assistant</i></b>	<i>Anita Wasilewska</i>
<b><i>Choreography, Spanish Dance</i></b>	<i>Jacqueline Kalata</i>
<b><i>Administrative Services</i></b>	<i>Karin Engel</i>
<b><i>Program Proofreading</i></b>	<i>Linda Pandolfi</i>
<b><i>Photography</i></b>	<i>Lara Caraiani, Dani Lettiere, Sergey Butkevich</i>
<b><i>Electronic Imaging</i></b>	<i>Sampurna Shrestha, Rosie Caston, Kevin Urso</i>
<b><i>Computer Technician</i></b>	<i>Sampurna Shrestha</i>

*We would like to acknowledge all those not listed here without whose contributions these performances would not have been possible.*



## Law Offices of Michael P. Giampilis, P.C.

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Agreements, etc.)
- Collections
- Commercial & General Practice

Congratulations Cora and the entire cast of  
the 2024 Nutcracker. Merry Christmas and a  
healthy and Happy New Year to all.

Love,  
Mike, Mom, Lyla, Katie



*Congratulations Aria!  
We are so proud of you!*

*Happy Holidays*

*— The Tsantes & Nappi Families*

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and the entire  
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*Then He  
appeared  
and the soul  
felt its worth.*

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To Isla Caston & the entire cast of the  
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Congratulations Molly,  
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Keep following  
your dreams!



Love,  
Mom, Dad  
and Joseph





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*Wishing everyone a  
Happy Holiday Season!*