



The

2024

NUTCRACKER

at Zoellner

Pennsylvania Youth Ballet

Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley



Hub Willson

Karen Kroninger Knerr, Artistic Director

Darin Lewis, Music Director



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The Story of Our Nutcracker Production

Performances of *The Nutcracker* have grown in a great American and Lehigh Valley tradition. The Lehigh Valley's *Nutcracker* tradition began fifty-six years ago in 1968. It was sponsored by The Junior League of the Lehigh Valley and was initially performed at the Allentown Symphony Hall, under the direction of Alexi Ramov. Through the generous grant contribution from The Junior League of the Lehigh Valley, and countless volunteer hours, the Ballet Guild's *Nutcracker* began.

While the Ballet Guild has undergone numerous changes throughout its own sixty-six-year history, one constant in the organization's seasonal calendar has been our annual *Nutcracker* production. Countless Lehigh Valley children and adults have performed in *The Nutcracker* production under the direction of Alexi Ramov, Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane, Aram Manukyan and current Artistic Director, Karen Kroninger Knerr. In addition, several Ballet Guild students have returned as professional guest artists to appear in this annual holiday treat. These alumni include Peter Degnan and Susan Taylor Degnan of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre; Richard Fritz of the Los Angeles Ballet Company; Leslie Jonas of the Boston Ballet; Karen Kroninger, then of the Juilliard School; and Joseph Fritz of the New Jersey Ballet/Metropolitan Opera Ballet. The Ballet Guild has also brought the magic of *The Nutcracker* to over 100,000 local school students as part of our popular school performances.

Because of the initial contribution of The Junior League of the Lehigh Valley, countless volunteers, the Ballet Guild's Board of Directors, the hard work and dedication of our previous and current artistic directors and dancers, the generous support of our sponsors and donors and the greater Lehigh Valley community, the Ballet Guild is proud to present its fifty-sixth consecutive *Nutcracker* production. Thank you for experiencing the magic and precision that we call *The Nutcracker*. Enjoy the show.



The Story of The Nutcracker

It is Christmas Eve. There is a party in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Stahlbaum, who are decorating the tree with the help of the maids. Clara and Fritz, the children of the house, exclaim with delight as they peep through the keyhole. Relatives and friends arrive for the evening's festivities. Once everyone has settled in, Dr. Stahlbaum organizes games and dances. After the presents have been distributed, there is an ominous occurrence: When the clock chimes, a frightening old owl flaps its wings and lights flicker eerily. The startled children run to their parents, and Herr Drosselmeyer appears at the door. He is a family friend, but nonetheless mysterious, with a patch covering one of his eyes! He has brought his handsome nephew Karl with him, and two boxes, which produce a Mechanical Doll and a Soldier Doll. In addition, there is a Nutcracker for Clara, which he presents to her after he demonstrates how it works. When her brother Fritz mischievously snatches it away and stomps on it, Herr Drosselmeyer repairs the broken Nutcracker's head by tying it in a handkerchief. Soon, all the girls are rocking their dolls to sleep.

The boys harass them by noisily tooting their trumpets and bugles. Herr Drosselmeyer's nephew brings Clara a toy bed so that she can tuck in the Nutcracker for the night, and shortly it is time for everyone to go to bed. Once all the guests have gone, Clara retrieves the Nutcracker, and cradling it in her arms, falls asleep on the sofa, where her mother covers her and lets her sleep. Suddenly, at midnight, Clara is awakened by the chiming of the clock and is terrified to see Herr Drosselmeyer on the Grandfather clock flapping his cape. She jumps up and begins to run but encounters mice scurrying in every direction. In the midst of her dream, the Christmas tree begins to grow! Herr Drosselmeyer appears again, and from the folds of his cape emerges a life-sized Nutcracker. Magically, toy soldiers appear. The Nutcracker marshals them into battle against the mice and their King. At the height of the battle, Clara throws her slipper at the Mouse King, striking and stunning him, and the Nutcracker runs him through with his sword!

Both Clara and the Nutcracker are whisked away by Herr Drosselmeyer; magically they are transported to The Land of Snow under the spell of the Snow Queen and her Cavalier. In The Kingdom of Sweets, the Sugar Plum Fairy makes a regal entry attended by Angels, followed by an array of confectioners. When Clara and Herr Drosselmeyer's nephew—transformed into a Prince—arrive, they are greeted by the Cooks, who invite them to taste some sweets. The Prince and Clara are seated on the throne and view the sumptuous offerings of the Sugar Plum Fairy's Kingdom, including Chocolate from Spain, Coffee from Arabia, Tea from China, Candy Canes, and Marzipan treats. Mother Ginger and her little Polichinelles arrive, as well as Waltzing Flowers and a Dew Drop, and there is a beautiful *pas de deux* by the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier. At the end of the Finale, everyone bids farewell to Clara and the Prince, as a sleigh carries them off—to where and what we shall never know. Yet, this is the magic and the beauty of *The Nutcracker*.



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The

NUTCRACKER

Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley

Marjorie Berlin Fink, Founder –1958

Karen Knerr, Artistic Director

Darin Lewis, Music Director

Guest Artists

Beckanne Sisk & Chase O’Connell

Stephaen Hood, Tevin Johnson

Saturday, December 14, 2024 – 12:00 & 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 15, 2024 – 12:00 & 4:00 p.m.

Baker Hall, Zoellner Arts Center - 420 E. Packer Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18015

Music..... P. I. Tchaikovsky
 Based on a Story by E. T. A. Hoffman
 Choreography & Staging Karen Knerr
 Costumes by..... Kristin Dundon, with Margaret Anderson, Olga Dvorovenko,
 Joanna Hoke, Drew Howard, Fritz Masten, Ruth McCormack, Erin Miller-Todd
 Lighting Design Justin Burns
 Executive Director, Zoellner Arts Center..... Mark Wilson
 Production & Stage Manager..... R. Elizabeth Miller
 Ballet Mistress..... Emelia Belet
 Wardrobe Mistress Kristin Dundon
 Sets..... J. Richard Fox, Grosh Scenic Studios
 Act I Living Room Design..... Carl Sprague
 Act I Living Room Scenic Art Services Michael Hagen, Inc.
 Christmas Tree Scott Mathiesen
 Technical Director & Deck Manager..... Scott Mathiesen
 Photography..... Eduardo Patino
 Videographer..... Video Theater

Unauthorized filming, videotaping, or photographing of the performances is strictly prohibited.
Please turn off all cell phones and pagers prior to the start of the performance. All casting is subject to change.

Act I

Scene I "The Christmas Party"

Clara.....Juliana Conklin (Sun.); Lorelei Zanelli (Sat.)
Fritz.....Nolan Nuhfer
Maids.....Ana Becker, Sophia Belet, Caitlin Bunn, Hope St. Amour
Dr. and Mrs. Stahlbaum....Mike Grigoruk and Joyce Pencek Yoder
Herr Drosselmeyer.....Kristopher Yoder
Karl, his nephew.....Aidan Lazo
Party Guests.....Andy Alulis, Karen Amate, Trevor Colahan, Oxana Dubrovskaya, Dave Ebert, Sara Massa, Erin Vavra, Phillip Wallens
Children.....*Girls:* Bailey Backman, Natalie Chamberlin, Phoenix DeGiovine, Jordyn Heaton, Jada Lewis, Emeline Nebzydoski, Cozette Strouse, Emilia Winmill
Boys: Patrick Colahan, Rufus Desir, Graham Fleming, Gabriel Goeser, Blake Jandl, Caelin Miller-Ingle, Arlo Sanders, Conan Vail, William Vail, Vison Zhao
Cousins: Elle Olaso, Calista Rego
Columbine.....Lucia Nowak (Sun.); Kayla Stahlnecker (Sat.)
Harlequin.....**Tevin Johnson**
Soldier Doll.....Marley Gidusko (Sat.); EllaMary Groller (Sun.)

Scene II "The Battle"

Toy Soldiers.....Lillian Brew, Ella Carroll, Zoe Kemmerer, Graciela Manzanares, Hannah Morrison, Faye Murtha, Ellamae Nebzydoski, Lydia Sams
Mouse King.....Andy Alulis
Mice.....Lucy Fletcher-Horst, Rebecca Guthrie, Brooklyn Long, Harper Longo, Liliana Matarazzo, Angela Pradid, Milania Turner, Anna Winkler
The Nutcracker.....Aidan Lazo
The Prince.....Aidan Lazo

Scene III "The Land of Snow"

Snow Queen.....Linnea Crouch (Sat. 4, Sun. 12); Finola Hieter (Sat. 12, Sun. 4)
Cavalier.....**Stephaen Hood**
Snowflakes.....Ava Baraket, Linnea Crouch (Sat. 12, Sun. 4), Yuula Estler, Marley Gidusko, EllaMary Groller, Finola Hieter (Sat. 4, Sun. 12), Eva Hinkle, Isabella Massa, Lucia Nowak, Francesca Reto, Kayla Stahlnecker, Isabel Stana, Ainsley Wright
Understudies: Sophia Belet, Isabella Cameron, Jillian Maruscak, Hope St. Amour, Gianna Soares

~ *Intermission* ~

Act II "The Kingdom of Sweets"

- Angels Everly Beck, Reese Beck, Kenna Colahan, Violet Fleming, Eve Kieber-Emmons, Peyton Konopka, Elsie Livesey, Layla Miller, Catia Rego, Soleil Vail, Everly Ward, Elin Wespestad
- Head Cook Jordyn Heaton
- Cooks Sophia Belet, Anastasia Cameron, Isabella Cameron, Johana Conklin, Phoenix DeGiovine, Jillian Maruscak, Lydia Sams, Hope St. Amour, Gianna Soares, Anna Winkler, Olivia Winmill, Ainsley Wright
- Chocolate from Spain Andy Alulis, David Shively-Ertas *with*
Ava Baraket and Isabel Stana (Sat. 12, Sun. 4)
Marley Gidusko and Francesca Reto (Sat. 4, Sun. 12)
- Coffee from Arabia **Stephaen Hood**, *with* Eva Hinkle
Attendants.....Lucia Nowak, Kayla Stahlnecker
- Tea from China Sophia Belet, Anastasia Cameron, Isabella Cameron, Jillian Maruscak (Sat. 12, Sun. 4), Hope St. Amour, Gianna Soares, Ainsley Wright (Sat. 4, Sun. 12)
Dragon.....Rufus Desir, Graham Fleming, Nolan Nuhfer
- Candy Cane Lead..... **Tevin Johnson**, *with*
Candy Canes.....Caitlin Bunn, Kathryn Carolan, Natalie Chamberlin, Juliana Conklin (Sat.), Emeline Nebzydoski, Lyndsey Rush, Emilia Winmill, Olivia Winmill, Lorelei Zanelli (Sun.)
- Marzipan Leads..... Yuula Estler (Sat. 12, Sun. 4); Isabel Stana (Sat. 4, Sun. 12)
- Marzipan Linnea Crouch, Yuula Estler (Sat. 4, Sun. 12), Marley Gidusko (Sat. 12, Sun. 4), Finola Hieter, Isabella Massa (Sat. 4, Sun. 12), Francesca Reto (Sat. 12, Sun. 4), Isabel Stana (Sat. 12, Sun. 4)
- Mother Ginger..... Dave Ebert
Little Polichinelles....Everly Beck, Reese Beck, Hailey Konopka, Sarah Morrison, Vison Zhao
Polichinelles..... Johana Conklin, Caterina Del Priore, Sarah Garrett, Hannah Morrison, Faye Murtha, Angela Pradid, Persephone Shimmel, Olivia Winmill
- Dew Drop..... Ava Baraket (Sat. 4, Sun. 12); Isabella Massa (Sat. 12, Sun. 4)
- Waltz of the Flowers Ava Baraket (Sat. 12, Sun. 4), Linnea Crouch, Yuula Estler, Marley Gidusko, EllaMary Groller, Finola Hieter, Eva Hinkle, Jillian Maruscak (Sat. 4, Sun. 12), Isabella Massa (Sat. 4, Sun. 12), Lucia Nowak, Francesca Reto, Isabel Stana, Ainsley Wright (Sat. 12, Sun. 4)
Understudies: Sophia Belet, Isabella Cameron, Hope St. Amour, Gianna Soares
- Sugar Plum Fairy and
Her Cavalier **Beckanne Sisk and Chase O'Connell**
- FINALE** **ALL**

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Artistic Director



Karen Kroninger Knerr, Artistic Director since 2007, holds a BFA in Dance from the Juilliard School where she trained in Graham, Taylor, and Limon techniques. She was a principal dancer with the Albany Berkshire Ballet, where she performed lead roles in *Cinderella* and *Coppélia*, as well as performing *Girl At Mirror* for the opening of the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, MA. In addition, Karen was a member of the Ellen Sinopoli Dance Company. She has worked with and performed works by Dennis Nahat, Laura Dean, Frances Patrelli and Bill T. Jones. Karen holds an Intermediate Certification in Labanotation and is an ABT Certified Teacher, having completed intensive training in the American Ballet Theatre National

Training Curriculum, a high-quality artistic training that is combined with the basics of dancer health and child development. She has developed the outreach program, “Discover Dance”, for the Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley. Karen teaches students from beginner level to advanced level for BGLV and has choreographed various works including Youth programs for the Allentown Symphony. In August 2019, Karen received her Certification in Progressing Ballet Technique.

Artistic Director Emerita



Mireille Briane entered the Paris Opera Ballet School at age seven, and studied there until her graduation. At the Opera Ballet school, she studied with some of the great teachers and artists of the day, but also found time to major in French literature. By the time she was eight, Mireille was performing regularly on stage, and by age sixteen she had become a Principal Dancer at the Grand Theatre of Bordeaux, France. Later, while appearing with Roland Petit’s ballet company, she met and married dancer Oleg

Briansky. The artistic team became world-renowned as ballet teachers and coaches. Mireille Briane also directed children’s ballets for television in France and Britain and taught for George Balanchine’s School of American Ballet, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, and many other prestigious dance organizations. Her version of *The Nutcracker* has been performed in the USA and abroad. From 1995 to 2006, the Brianskys served as artistic and educational directors of the Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley and Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. They were the founders and directors of the Briansky Saratoga Ballet Center summer ballet intensive at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York, which was in operation for 43 years.

Music Director



Darin Lewis began his musical studies at the age of seven. He attended Northwestern University, and continued his studies with Daniel Pollack at the University of Southern California, where he graduated *cum laude*. Upon his graduation, he was awarded a Rotary Scholarship, allowing him to do post-graduate work at the Royal Northern College of Music in England. While in England, Mr. Lewis made his orchestral debut playing Mozart. He returned to the United States, and began work on his Master’s degree in Piano Performance at Yale University. At Yale, with the encouragement and guidance of Ezra Laderman and Joan Panetti, Mr. Lewis began to further explore his abilities as a composer. In 1990, Mr. Lewis conducted performances of his *Requiem*

at Yale and in California. In 1991, after graduating from Yale, Mr. Lewis received a Teaching Fellowship at the City College of New York, where he began working on a Master’s degree in composition with the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Del Tredici. Upon his graduation, Mr. Lewis joined the music faculty of the Horace Mann School. During his tenure at Horace Mann, he composed numerous works for the Orchestra, Concert Band, Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, and Choral groups. Mr. Lewis completed his Doctorate in Music Education at Boston University in 2016. He is an active composer with works being performed throughout the United States having been performed by St. Olaf, Sons Florida’s Singing Sons, and the Boston Pops and at venues such as Alice Tully Hall, Southwark Cathedral, Alliance Française, and Carnegie Hall.

Guest Artists



Beckanne Sisk (*Sugar Plum Fairy*) began her ballet training with Longview Ballet Theater at the age of five. She studied there until age thirteen when she moved to Philadelphia, PA to attend The Rock School for Dance Education on scholarship. She was a part of the Rock's RAPA program for four years. While there, Sisk won the Jerome Robbins award in 2007, and competed at the Youth America Grand Prix from 2007-2010, placing in 1st and 3rd. Adam Sklute invited her to join Ballet West II in 2010, at age seventeen, after seeing her compete at YAGP. After one year in Ballet West II, she joined the main company as a New Artist in 2011 and then to Principal in 2015. She joined Houston Ballet as Principal Dancer in August 2022.

She has performed the female principal roles in Anna Marie Holmes' *Don Quixote*, John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Onegin*, as well as Adam Sklute's adaptations of *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Swan Lake*. Sisk has been noticed by *The Washington Post* in William Christensen's *The Nutcracker*, "one of the most charming and beguiling ballerinas to embody the role in recent memory. She was every bit the fairy-tale queen of one's dreams – regal but warm, expressive but subtly so, who sustained her balances as if mere air held her up, and yet paradoxically, her dominant quality was softness." Also, her performance in Cranko's *Onegin* was recognized by *Pointe Magazine* as one of the Standout Performances of 2019.

Original principal roles have been created on her by many renowned contemporary choreographers such as Nicolo Fonte, Val Caniparoli, Edwaard Liang and Matthew Neenan. She has since become an international guest star.

In addition to her dancing, Sisk was featured on the CW's Breaking Pointe television show for two seasons and has appeared in *Mexico Vogue*. She also won the Bronze Medal in the Beijing International Ballet Competition in June 2012 and was chosen for the 2012 Princess Grace Dance Fellowship Award.



Chase O'Connell (*Sugar Plum Cavalier*) was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia and started taking dance classes at the age of 2. At age 13, he received a scholarship to train at the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington, D.C. He studied under Vladimir Djoulouhadze and Anatoli Kucheruk from 2007 to 2009. In 2009 he received a scholarship to train at the Royal Ballet School in London, England. There, he studied under Meelis Pakri and David Peden. While at school he had the privilege to perform with English National Ballet in their 2010 *Nutcracker*.

After studying at the Royal Ballet School for 2 years, O'Connell joined the world-renowned Paris Opera Ballet to perform in their 2011 production of Rudolf Nureyev. In 2012 he began his contract with Ballet West II. He was promoted into the main company in 2013, then promoted to Principal in 2016. He joined Houston Ballet as Principal Dancer in August 2022.

While at Ballet West he has performed principal roles in ballets by John Cranko, Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, Jiří Kylián, Jerome Robbins, Nicolo Fonte, Stanton Welch AM, and Adam Sklute. He also had contemporary principal roles created on him by Nicolo Fonte, Edwaard Liang, Africa Guzman, and Val Caniparoli.

O'Connell has danced in galas internationally and his performance in *Onegin* was one of *Pointe Magazine's* top performances in 2019.

"He is a dynamic dancer, the consummate prince, and a caring partner to his ballerinas," said Ballet West Artistic Director Adam Sklute.



Stephaen Hood (*Snow King, Arabian*), a native of Baltimore, began his formal classical training with the Mid-Atlantic Youth Ballet. He later went on to study at the Rock School for Dance Education as a full scholarship recipient. In 2013, he graduated from the University of the Arts receiving a B.F.A. in Classical Ballet. Upon graduation, he performed and studied under Christopher Fleming with Ballet-Fleming. Stephaen was a member of Ohio's Verb Contemporary Ballets for three seasons. He performed works by Anthony Kruztcamp, Heinz Poll, Diane McIntyre, William Forsythe and trained under Cuban National Ballet Director Laura Alonso. He has been a guest artist for the Poetic Expression Dance Company, Carbon Dance Theater and the Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley. He has performed lead roles in ballets such as *Coppélia*, *La Bayadere*, *The Nutcracker*, *Spartacus*, & *Spring Waters* to name a few. Stephaen has also performed as a soloist for the Ballet Theatre of Maryland for two seasons. Stephaen is currently a freelance artist while working full time as a dance teacher for Anne Arundel County Public Schools.



Tevin Johnson (*Harlequin, Candy Cane*), a Syracuse, New York native, began his dance training at the age of 15. Johnson attended the Alvin Ailey's Professional Division Summer Dance Intensive on a scholarship in 2013, where he worked with Christian Von Howard, Freddy Moore and Pedro Ruiz Jr. He received a BFA in Dance from Montclair State University, where he was featured in works such as *Running Spirits and Wild and Free* (Draft5) by Fredrick Earl Mosley, Larry Keigwin, Christian Von Howard, Stacey Tookey, and Camille A. Brown. He soon joined Roxey Contemporary Ballet Company in New Jersey for two seasons and worked alongside the company's outreach programs. In 2020, Tevin was added to the faculty of the City College of Manhattan's theater department. He also taught at various studios in New Jersey. Some of his many awards and honors include the Jenni-Lynn Watson Scholarship, Cento Amici Scholarship, and the 2014 National NAACP ACT-SO Gold Medal for Dance. Tevin was also featured in various publications, such as Young Artist on *Extraordinary People and Places in Central New York* with Carrie Lazarus, and in the 2016 calendar of *Dancers Among Us* by photographer Jordan Matter.

Adult Cast

Karen Amate (*Party Guest*), retired math and physics teacher at Lehigh Career & Technical Institute, has danced since age three and was a soloist at Ballet Theatre of Scranton, where she studied with Constance Reynolds. She taught ballet for 20 years in Hillsborough, NJ. Karen's many interests include adult ballet classes at BGLV, performing in *The Nutcracker*, playing handbells, performing liturgical dance, and helping prepare Polish foods and other goodies for her church's fundraisers. She is the mother of two sons, Daniel and Jeffrey, both Eagle Scouts. She enjoys spending time with her grandchildren Rosie, Ben, Campbell, and Jill.

Trevor Colahan (*Party Guest*) was born and raised in the Lehigh Valley. He is a lifelong performer having had his first ballet classes in his youth followed by years of theatre, music, and other dance styles. Trevor shares his passion for the arts with his wife, Diana, whom he met when cast as boyfriend and girlfriend in their high school musical, *The Music Man*. They both returned to ballet as adults at the Ballet Guild and continue to share their love of dance with their sons Patrick and Owen. When not performing, Trevor can be found on the Hurling pitch with the Allentown Hibernians or at his day job as a Senior Capital Project Manager for Bristol Myers Squibb.

Oxana Dubrovskaya (*Party Guest*) arrived in the United States in 2011 with her husband and young daughter from Estonia where the entire family had grown up. A professional artist, painter, sculptor, and until recently a doll doctor and a collector of antique and author dolls, she tried ballet for the first time in the fall of 2017. She began attending Adult Ballet Classes at the Ballet Guild and since then has devoted her time to everything ballet-related. Afraid to even dare to dream about performing on stage, she was thrilled to gain some stage experience by dancing as a Party Guest in previous PYB *Nutcracker* productions and as a Peasant in PYB's production of *Coppélia*.

Dave Ebert (*Party Guest, Mother Ginger*) is thrilled to return to the ballet for the third year in a row. Dave is a digital designer by day and a performing musician by night (lead singer and guitarist for local band RadioOne) and wishes to thank not only the wonderful teachers and staff at PYB, but the other party parents for their patience and guidance during the rehearsal process. Being a part of something this magical and meaningful is something Dave will never forget!

Mike Grigoruk (*Dr. Stahlbaum*) is returning to the performance this year to once again participate in “the greatest holiday party ever.” Beginning on stage in 2001 with his daughter Bronte, Mike has been involved both as a party guest and as Dr. Stahlbaum for over 15 years. As Mike says each year about participating in PYB’s *Nutcracker*, “What a delightful way to bring in the holiday season, and what a wonderful opportunity to be involved in this first-class production.” Mike provides construction management services for CEG (Cedarville Engineering Group) in their Pennsylvania Municipal Engineering Department. His biggest stage critic is his wife, Mary, although he also welcomes performance comments from his children and grandchildren – as long as they’re positive...

Sara Massa (*Party Guest*) is delighted to return to the Ballet Guild’s *Nutcracker*. This marks her tenth year sharing the stage with her daughter Isabella. Sara grew up in CT, where she studied ballet at The Marsha Ismailoff Mark School of Ballet and the Connecticut Ballet Center. She now lives in Bethlehem where she is a full-time mother of four, part-time yoga instructor, and free-time student at the Ballet Guild. Sara is grateful to her husband who helps create time for her to share this experience with their daughter. She is also thankful for her parents and sister who make the yearly trek down from Connecticut to move in and take over during *Nutcracker* week. Without them, this would not be possible.

Erin Vavra (*Party Guest*) is a life-long admirer of ballet. She has been taking adult ballet classes at the Ballet Guild since 2014. She has performed in the Guild’s production of *Coppélia* in 2019. Erin debuted as a party parent in the 2020 virtual performance of *The Nutcracker*. Erin also enjoys swing dancing, costume making and reading. Erin is the owner/ director of A Child’s Choice Montessori School located in Bethlehem. She is excited to be dancing on stage with one of her former students this year!

Phillip Wallens (*Party Guest*) is back on stage with the Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley for his sixth consecutive performance of *The Nutcracker*. Phillip currently teaches elementary general music in the Bangor Area School District. Despite moving to New Jersey more than a year ago, Phillip returns to Pennsylvania to continue advocating for arts education. He is a music director for two theatres, Star of The Day in Emmaus and Rebels Stages in The Delaware Water Gap. He is on the board of The Friends of Music of Bethlehem, a non-profit dedicated to supporting classical music education in the Lehigh Valley. Phillip has a deep appreciation for the arts and enjoys serving children in discovering their own love for the arts. He would like to thank the directors, office managers, and other performers, both young and seasoned, for their hard work and dedication to the arts.

Joyce Yoder (*Mrs. Stahlbaum*) is humbled to mark sixteen years appearing as Mrs. Stahlbaum, sharing the stage with hundreds of student and professional dancers. A lifelong ballet enthusiast, Joyce received her early training with Joane Manze in Clarks Summit, PA and at Ballet Theatre of Scranton. She studied at the PA Governor’s School for the Arts and Pennsylvania Ballet School’s summer programs. She is a former professional member of the DanceGing Company and has appeared in several featured dance roles with Pennsylvania Youth Theatre. She has served as choreographer for Trexler Middle School’s musical productions and is a former ballet instructor for Muhlenberg College’s Community Dance Center. Joyce was featured as Arabian and Dew Drop in previous BGLV/PYB productions of *The Nutcracker*. She has also participated in their productions of *Cinderella*, *La Boutique Fantasque*, *Coppélia*, *Four Seasons*, *Our Town*, and *Peter Pan*. Joyce is honored to be a member of PYB’s Board of Directors.

Kristopher Yoder (*Herr Drosselmeyer*) is honored once again to grace the stage in the Ballet Guild’s *The Nutcracker*. He most recently was seen as Dr. Coppélius in last Spring’s *Coppélia*, as well as numerous other Ballet Guild productions in the past. He is proud to continue to join this Christmas favorite.

Ballet Mistress



Emelia Belet, also a BGLV/PYB faculty member teaching ballet, began dancing at the age of three at North Jersey School of Dance Arts under Christine Taylor and Luba Gulyaeva. In 2014, she joined Ballet Guild of Lehigh Valley/ Pennsylvania Youth Ballet to further her training at the age of 12 under Artistic Director Karen Knerr. While there she performed many roles, including Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Prayer and one of Coppélia's friends in *Coppélia*, and Arabian Lead, Dewdrop, and Snow Queen all in Ballet Guild's annual production of *The Nutcracker*. Upon graduating in the summer of 2020, Emelia was accepted as an American Repertory Ballet's Trainee under the direction of Adymara Cabrera and Ethan Steifel and remained there for three years. While in the program, she performed with the school and company in many productions, including Snow, Flowers, and Marzipan Corps in ARB's *The Nutcracker*, Arabian Lead in Princeton Ballet School *Nutcracker Suite*, Willis in *Giselle* in the schools spring trainee production. After her three years in Princeton with American Repertory Ballet, Emelia is excited to move back home and start teaching at the studio she considers home and begin her next journey in the teaching side of the ballet world.

Our Faculty



Adriane Orcutt-Fraser, *Dance Instructor*, hails from a family of teachers and is as passionate about the Art of Teaching as she is about the Art of Dance. Having grown in a family where education was a way of life, as well as being a homeschooling parent, Adriane knows first-hand about the need to balance strict with fun and structure with creativity. Caring about her students' health, well-being, and artistic development is essential to Adriane's teaching style and choreographic goals. Adriane began her ballet training at Budzynski Studios/Dance Theater of Pa. She studied Ballet, Pointe, and Ukrainian Folk dance and was able to perform demi-soloist and soloist roles alongside professional dancers. Adriane was accepted into the school of Philadanco, where she received training in Graham and Horton modern technique from Milton Myers and Pat Thomas and continued her training in ballet and pointe. Adriane was a scholarship student at BalletMet and Joffrey Ballet School Summer Intensives where she studied with Melinda Baker and Francesca Corkle, among others. As a high school senior, Adriane was accepted on scholarship into the BFA dance program of De Sales University. She studied and performed with university seniors and received college credit for her dance courses. Adriane was also invited to train and rehearse with Danco II, Philadanco's Second Company and she was involved in a youth performance group that toured and performed in West Africa. After high school, Adriane attended Fordham University. While studying for an academic degree in Philosophy/History, and because a dual major in dance was not an option at the university at that time, Adriane studied dance in the Alvin Ailey/Fordham BFA program by audition as a non-major. She was privileged to receive training in ballet, pointe, modern and jazz and perform works from world-renowned teachers and choreographers, including Celia Marino, Denise Vale, Ana Marie Forsythe and Carl Paris. Adriane has taught Ballet, Pointe, Modern, Jazz, Contemporary/Lyrical and Folk Dance in New York, Long Island, and Pennsylvania. She enjoys teaching students of all ages, from toddlers to adults, and is passionate about instilling the love of dance and artistic expression to all dancers, whether recreational students or professionally bound.



Carolyn Lippert, *Dance Instructor*, was born in Boston, Massachusetts and trained at Severance Ballet Conservatory with her mother, Carla Stallings-Lippert, and at the American Ballet Theatre Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School. Lippert was named a National Training Scholar and attended American Ballet Theatre Summer Intensives on full scholarship from 2008-2011. Lippert joined the ABT Studio Company in September 2011 and performed with American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House in 2013. She went on to dance with The Washington Ballet for their 2013-2014 season and San Francisco Ballet for their 2014-2015 season. Lippert joined American Ballet Theatre as a member of the corps de ballet in 2015 and went on to perform in *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *La Bayadere*, *Firebird*,

and *The Seasons* to name a few. While with ABT, Lippert also took college classes at CUNY and graduated *summa cum laude* with a bachelors in phycology in 2021. In that same year, Lippert retired to pursue a career in medicine. Lippert is ABT National Training Curriculum certified and enjoys teaching whenever possible. She plans to remain a part of the ballet world and looks forward to sharing her passion and knowledge of classical ballet with students.



Arielle Ridley, *Dance Instructor*, developed a passion for teaching dance at age 14 while a student at Miss Autumn’s Dance Class, in Quakertown, Pennsylvania. She began teaching there and helped to develop the curriculum—everything from ballet, jazz, tap, contemporary dance, musical theater, and hip hop—and has been working steadily ever since to deepen her knowledge of the art and her commitment to producing fine young dancers. After completing high school, Arielle graduated with honors and a B.F.A. in Dance Theatre from AMDA College of the Performing Arts, New York and Los Angeles. While she studied almost every form of dance, Arielle’s primary focus there was Contemporary and Jazz. After graduation, she gained performing experience with companies such as Anne-Marie Mulgrew and Dancers, JWCK Dance Lab, Dance Kerr and Dancers, and several other theater projects. Arielle also explored the world of film and television when a student at AMDA LA and AMDA NY. “I teach with love, kindness, but with enough discipline to encourage children and teenagers to grow. I try to connect with every student as best I can, so that no one feels unseen, unheard, or unimportant,” she says. Arielle Ridley’s interests aren’t limited to dance, however. She enjoys film editing, choreography, creative writing, and is a published YA author.



Carley Russell, *Dance Instructor*, is a passionate performer and teacher, with years of professional experience in the industry. She grew up dancing and trained at Allegheny Ballet Company in Pennsylvania, going onto pursue a Jazz Dance degree at Point Park University. While training there, she spent her summers doing intensives with other schools, including The Boston Conservatory, and choreographing shows for local theaters. While on spring break from the university, Carley auditioned and booked the international tour of *West Side Story*, which took her to 22 cities and 18 countries; her favorites including Dublin, Tokyo, Paris, and Auckland. After tour she moved to New York City and worked at various regional theaters around the country. In between performing opportunities, Carley found a love for teaching dance and choreographing. She taught various workshops, nationally and internationally, with original choreography and repertoire. She loves to see kids learning and enjoying her classes and has experience teaching students of all ages.



Daniel Russell, *Dance Instructor*, is an Australian-born professional performer with extensive experience in choreography and teaching across multiple styles. From Steven Spielberg’s *West Side Story* film, to dancing on Broadway in *The Music Man*, to performing live on *The Tony Awards*, tap dancing on *The Price is Right*, acting on primetime television, and playing leading roles in international and Broadway tours, Daniel has been a sought-after performer for over fifteen years. Daniel has choreographed worldwide, including a video for pop-star Tori Kelly, and *Holdin’ It In*, which premiered at the Symphony Space NYC. Daniel has been a part of the audition team for shows across the world including the Australian production of *Matilda*, and Randy Skinner’s *White Christmas* National Tour. Daniel has held workshops across the world, from San Fransisco to Australia’s east coast, and judged multiple dance competitions nationwide across the USA. Daniel brings his plethora of knowledge to the classroom in his workshops and lessons, teaching group classes to students of all ages in an enjoyable and focused learning environment.



Carol Jolley Sarik, *Dance Instructor*, received her early training at Princeton Ballet under founder Audrey Estey. (She was thrilled to dance the role of Clara in *The Nutcracker* for two years as a young student.) A graduate of the Walnut Hill School of Performing Arts, she was then accepted into the Banff School of Fine Arts Summer Intensive in Alberta, Canada where she performed in their summer festival production of *Les Sylphides*. Receiving her teacher training from the Royal Ballet School in London, England, Carol returned to the United States where she opened and operated her own school in Jamesburg, New Jersey for seventeen years. While teaching, Ms. Sarik also danced professionally as a soloist with the Shore Ballet Company, performing such roles as Swanhilda in *Coppélia* and the lead role in *Cinderella*. She danced with the Carolyn Dorfman Company in its early years. She continues to attend teacher training programs such as the Dance Teacher Web Conference in Las Vegas, as well as injury prevention seminars. In 2019, Carolyn received her Certification in Progressing Ballet Technique.

Our Staff

Tanja Fetzer Howard, *the Ballet Guild's indefatigable Office Manager*, is something of a Renaissance woman. She has many interests, and pursues them all with enthusiasm. Among her most favored ways to spend time she counts dance, music, and history of all eras. She had a chance to combine two of these when she assisted prominent dance historian Patricia McAndrew in preparing some translations from the Danish. Tanja goes beyond a purely intellectual appreciation of the arts to performance. She has taken courses in African dance, country line dance, Middle Eastern dance, and tap dancing, as well as African Djembe drumming and frame drumming. In addition to performing with Tahya's percussion group at Mayfair and Musikfest, she has also danced with Star City Tribal and PURE dance troupes. However, none of her interests mean more to her than her two children, Brenna and Drew Howard. Tanja comes to her present job with the Ballet Guild through a long and grueling apprenticeship as a Ballet Mom.

Kristin Dundon, *Costume Mistress*, is grateful for her "sewing squad" of volunteers who help bring the costumes to life on the Zoellner Stage for the 2024 *Nutcracker*! She has a degree in Theater from DeSales University. The wardrobe room at the Guild brings back fond memories of her childhood ballet classes with Miss Marjorie B. Fink. Her new costume designs for the Ballet Guild's 50th Anniversary of *The Nutcracker* held in 2018 were inspired by the early costumes designed for the Ballet Guild by Mrs. Zimmerman! She has recently started working as a stylist and wardrobe supervisor in the world of film.



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Double Bass

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Nutcracker Treble Choirs 2024

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Lily Bailey	Shekinah Henry	Antonia Pacchioni
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Wyatt Breidinger	Sydney Jones	Miley Salter
Mary Chickilly	Emma Klaus	Evan Seidick
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Elsie Conrad	Scarlet Kubilius	Zoey Strouse
Aubrey Cser	Evelyn Lack	Jocelyn Strittmatter
Macyn Davidick	Sophia Lahr	Abigail Vermeulen
Caylee Dearden	Greta-Lynn Lesko	Lana Weiko
Kali Dimler	Jasmine Martinez	Autumn Yost
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Ella Bloszinsky	Ryleigh Kohler	Jocelynn Spengler
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Angel Wranglers	Christen Fleming with Destiny Beck, Jenna Fletcher, Sheena Guthrie, Stephanie Livesey, Sandra Rego, Jennifer Ward, Lindsay Weststad
Production Volunteers	Tracy Breisch, Lindsay Bunn, Maggie Burnett, Rebekah Chamberlin, Michele Geronimo Goeser, Heather Gidusko, Karen Groller, Jenn Heaton, Stephanie Lewis, Danielle Matarazzo, Shannon McGinley-Jaindl, Judith Nuhfer, Brianne Olaso, Alicia Rampulla, Sandra Rego, Lindsey Sanders, Tiffany Shimmel, Kristy Wright
Props	Peggy Soares, with Jen Maruscak, Dave Soares (Sleigh), Gianna Soares
Load In/Out	Gina Hinkle
Ushers	Rebekah Chamberlin, Shannon McGinley-Jaindl, Alex Rego, Deb Stahlnecker, Amy Zanelli
Stage Crew	Brian Miller, Katrina Miller, Zoë Miller, Sydney Weaver
Zoellner Team	Josh Kovar, Production Manager; Kyle Rudgers, Assistant Production Manager; Justin Burns, Lighting Coordinator; Phil Ingle, Audio Coordinator
Zoellner Stage Crew	Colin Reynolds, Audio Operator; Brian Meehan, Lighting Operator; Kai Danyluk, Fly-Rail Operator
Additional ZAC Crew	Todd Burkel, Abby Jurbala, Zach Miller, Jordan Pappas, Daniel St. John, Lauren Schultz, Sydney Weaver
Costumes	Scaramouche Costume Shop (Bob and Mark) – Mother Ginger

Thank you to all whose contributions were received after program deadlines.

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Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley

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2007- Present	Karen Kroninger Knerr

56 Years of Nutcracker Guest Artists (1968-2024)

YEAR	SUGAR PLUM FAIRY	HER CAVALIER	COMPANY
1968	Fiona Furstner	Jacques Cebron	Pennsylvania Ballet
1969	Barbara Sandonato	Alexei Yudenich	Pennsylvania Ballet
1970	Christina Sarry	John Sowinski	American Ballet Company (Eliot Feld, Director)
1971	Hilda Morales	Keith Martin	Pennsylvania Ballet
1972	Hilda Morales	Lawrence Rhodes	Pennsylvania Ballet
1973	Olga Ferri	Ramon Segarra	Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires, Argentina (Olga)
1974	Barbara Sandonato	Ramon Segarra	Pennsylvania Ballet (Barbara)
1975	Linda Miller	John Sowinski	Eliot Feld Ballet
1976	Susan Taylor Degnan	Peter Degnan	Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre
1977	Durine Alinova	David Drummond	Boston Ballet
1978	Tamara Hadley	William DeGregory	Pennsylvania Ballet
1979	Zelma Bustillo	Luis Fuente	Joffrey Ballet
1980	Megan Murphy	John Sowinski	Eliot Feld Ballet
1981	Tamara Rimes	Richard Fritz	Los Angeles Ballet Company
1982	Jocelyne Mocogni	Craig Williams	Eliot Feld Ballet / Ballet Nuevo Mundo de Caracas
1983	Leslie Jonas	Alexandre Proia	Boston Ballet
1984	Ana Maria Castanon	Roberto Rodriguez	Ballets de San Juan, Puerto Rico
1985	Ana Maria Castanon	Roberto Rodriguez	Ballets de San Juan, Puerto Rico
1986	Stephanie Moy	Leslie Howard	Boston Ballet
1987	Kristin Schleich	Richard Fritz	Ballet Northeast
1988	Karen Kroninger	Michael Haubrich-Visconti	Juilliard School/Ballets de San Juan, Puerto Rico

56 Years of Nutcracker Guest Artists (1968-2024)

YEAR	SUGAR PLUM FAIRY	HER CAVALIER	COMPANY
1989	Rosemary Sabovik <i>Elizabeth Knecht</i>	Joseph Fritz Michael Krochak	New Jersey Ballet/Metropolitan Opera Ballet (School Performances)
1990	Rosemary Sabovik	Joseph Fritz	New Jersey Ballet/Metropolitan Opera Ballet
1991	Lauren Gelfand	Alexander Kedrov	Boston Ballet
1992	Susanna Vennerbeck	Alexander Kedrov	Boston Ballet
1993	Jenni Hjalmarson	Dimitri Nechayev	Universal Ballet Company, Seoul, Korea (Jenni)
1994	Roseanne Germer	Alexei Borovik	Pennsylvania Ballet
1995	Margaret Tracey Cassandra Crowder	Ethan Stiefel John Thomas Bell	New York City Ballet BGLV Residential Scholarship Winner / Maryland Ballet (School Performances)
1996	Margaret Tracey/ Jennifer Ringer Anne Elizabeth Milewski	Nikolaj Hübbe Nikolaj Hübbe Andrei Dokukin	New York City Ballet New York City Ballet American Ballet Theatre (School Performances)
1997	Irina Dvoroenko Tamara Barden	Maxim Belotserkovsky Andrei Dokukin	American Ballet Theatre American Ballet Theatre (School Performances)
1998	Irina Dvoroenko	Maxim Belotserkovsky	American Ballet Theatre
1999	Irina Dvoroenko Adrienne Schulte	Maxim Belotserkovsky Giray Atalay	American Ballet Theatre American Ballet Theatre (School Performances)
2000	Pollyanna Ribiero	Paul Thrussell	Boston Ballet
2001	Ekaterina Shelkova	Michael Cusmano	American Ballet Theatre
2002	Yoko Kaneta	Kazuma Ogasawara	Freelance, Japan
2003	Vlada Kysseleva	Hennadi Bespechnyi	Ukraine, France, & South Carolina
2004	Michele Wiles	Ricardo Torres	American Ballet Theatre / Ballet Concierto de Puerto Rico
2005	Zhong-Jing Fang	Jared Matthews	American Ballet Theatre
2006	Violeta Angelova	Alfiero Supan	Freelance
2007	Amanda Cobb-Ennis	Justin Peck	American Ballet Theatre / Cedar Lake Dance Company
2008	Elisabeth Holowchuk	Ted Seymour	The Suzanne Farrell Ballet
2009	Sarah Lane	Luis Ribagorda	American Ballet Theatre
2010	Riolama Lorenzo	Sergio Torrado	Pennsylvania Ballet
2011	Jennie Somogyi	Ask la Cour	New York City Ballet
2012	Ashley Boudier	Matthew Dibble	New York City Ballet / Twyla Tharp Dance
2013	Aynsley Taylor Inglis	Vitali Krauchenka	Freelance / American Ballet Theatre
2014	Aynsley Taylor Inglis	Brett van Sickle	Freelance / The Suzanne Farrell Ballet
2015	Lauren Fadeley	Francis Veyette	Pennsylvania Ballet
2016	Ashley Ellis	Lasha Khozashvili	Boston Ballet
2017	Beckanne Sisk	Chase O'Connell	Ballet West
2018	Liliann DiPiazza	Ian Hussey	Pennsylvania Ballet
2019	Devon Teuscher	Alexandre Hammoudi	American Ballet Theatre
2020	Oksana Maslova	Sterling Baca	Pennsylvania Ballet
2021	Dayesi Torriente	Arian Molina Soca	Philadelphia Ballet (formerly Pennsylvania Ballet)
2022	Amanda Smith	Da' Von Doane	Dance Theatre of Harlem
2023	Seo Hye Han	John Lam	Boston Ballet
2024	Beckanne Sisk	Chase O'Connell	Houston Ballet

Bold Font = student of Alexi Ramov, not a member of the BGLV

Bold Italic Font = BGLV company member alumnus

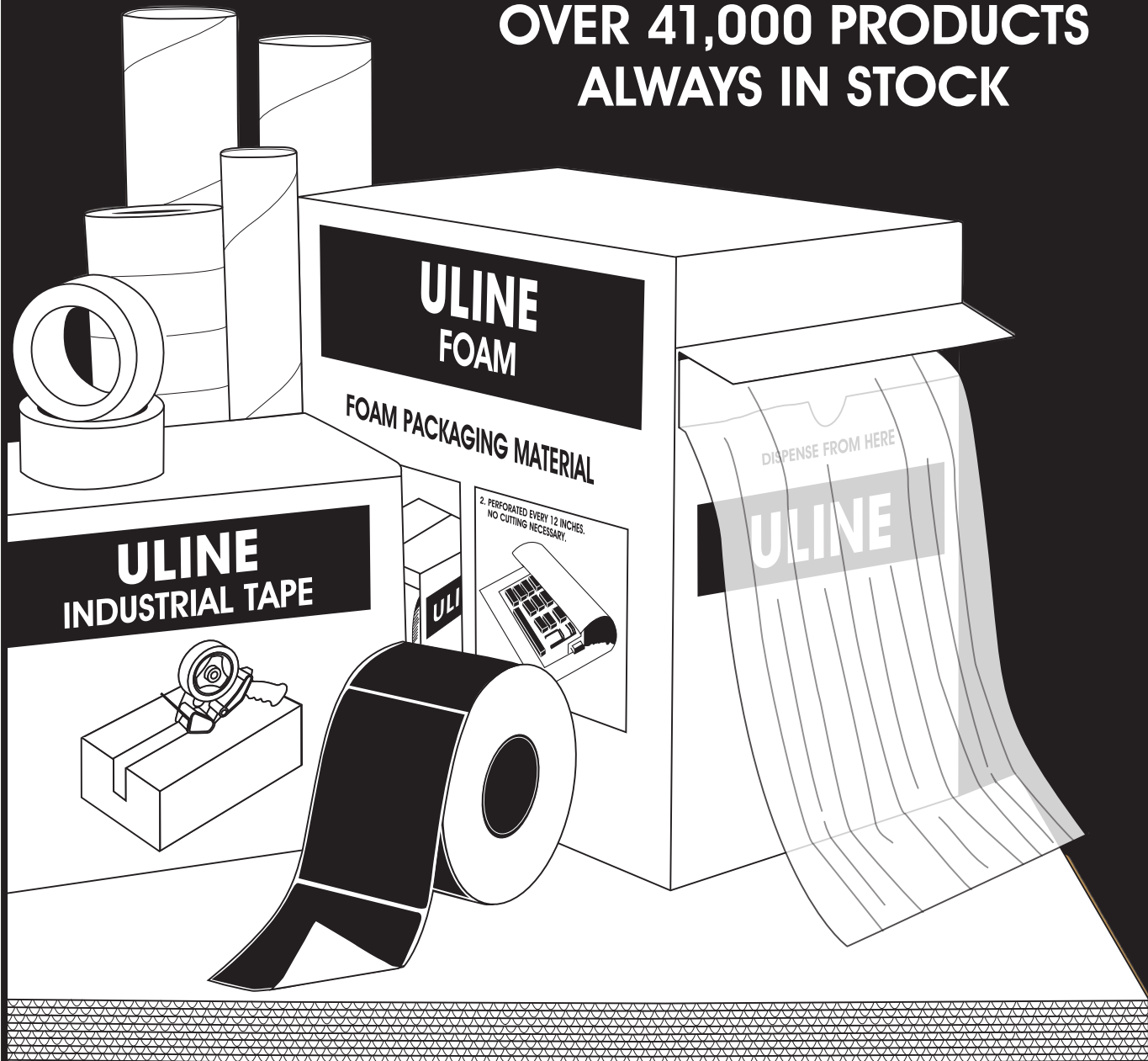
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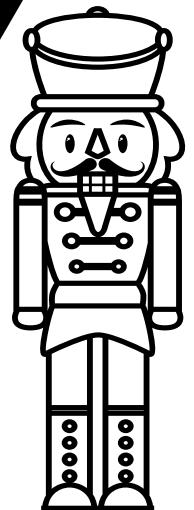
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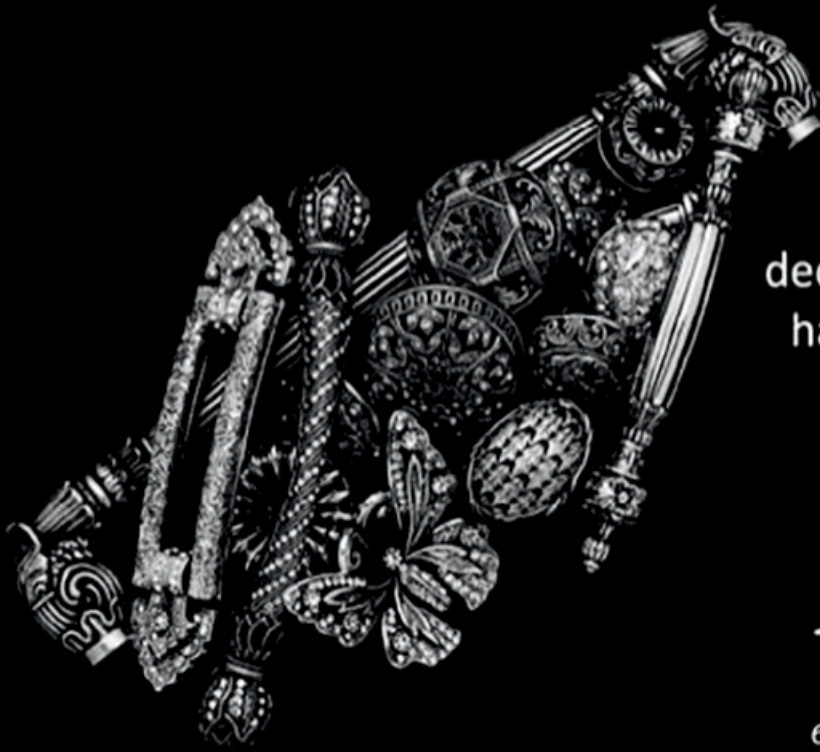
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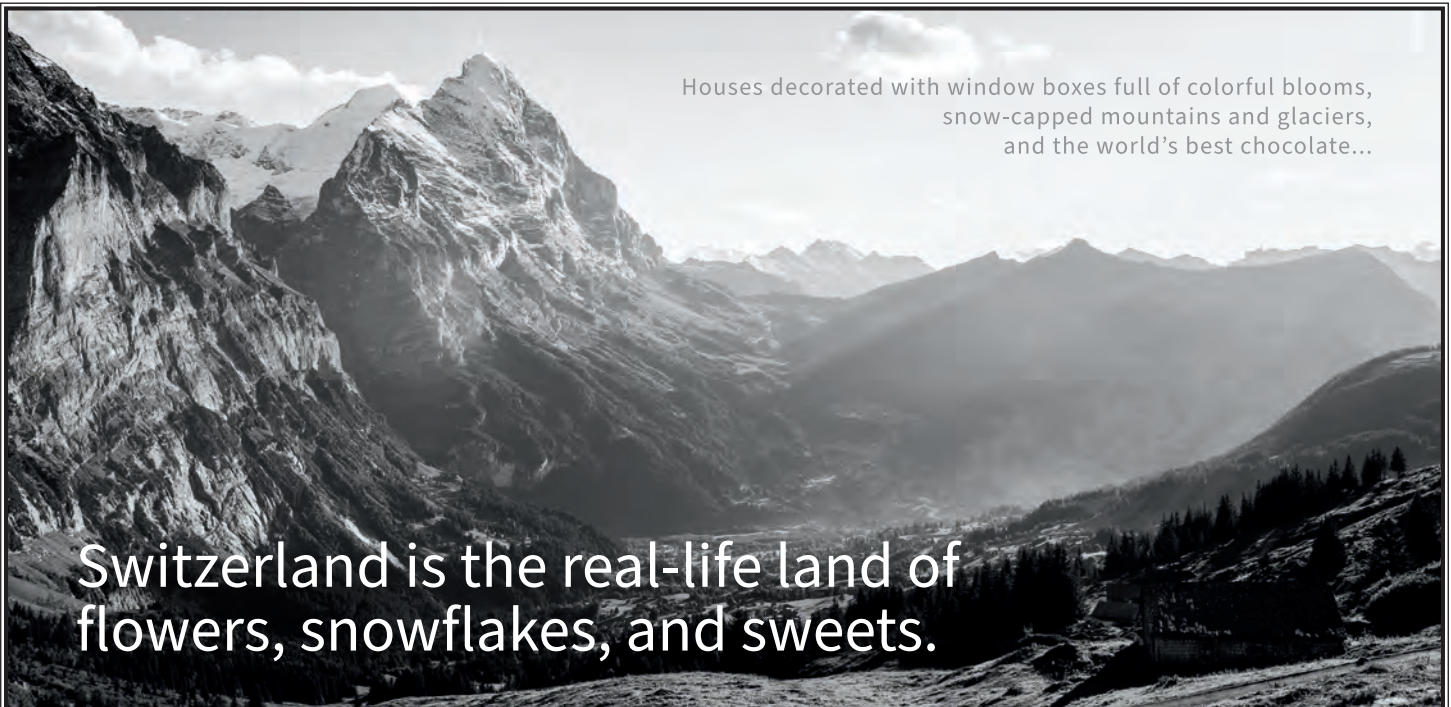
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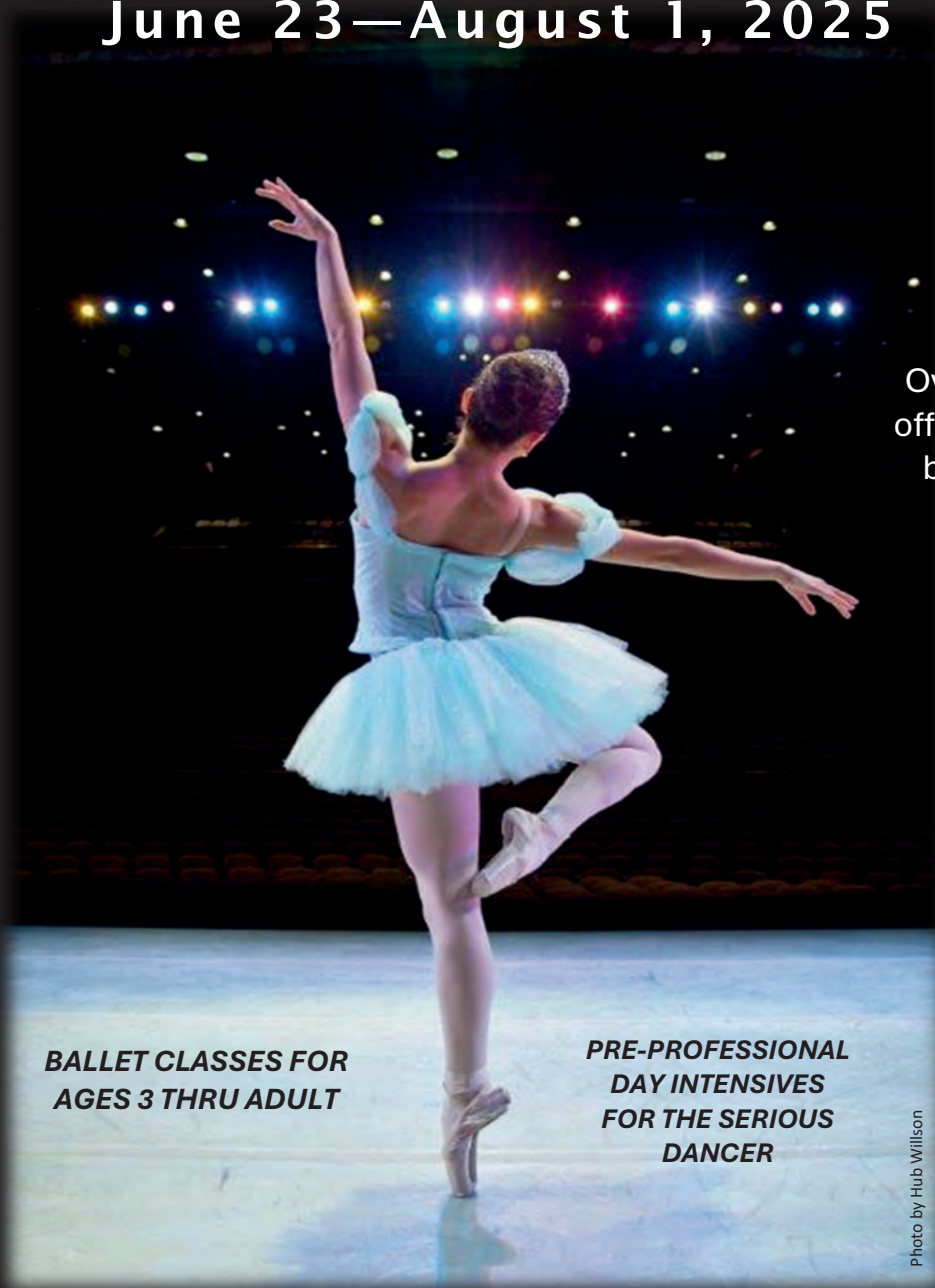
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As you probably know, this is a busy time for our dancers and staff as we prepare for the 56th annual production of *The Nutcracker*. This year, performances will run December 11-15 and will, again, feature world-renowned guest artists, with full orchestral accompaniment by the talented South Side Sinfonietta. We are so proud to have increased the number of performances to sold-out audiences, continued the addition of a full orchestra and choir for all performances, and forged a partnership with Zoellner Arts Center and the Lehigh University Music Department. *The Nutcracker* is truly the pinnacle of our year and an opportunity for the Lehigh Valley community to come together to support their neighbors and the arts.

The Nutcracker and our spring production of *Coppélia* were wonderfully successful and we need your support now more than ever to continue our work with students—providing free tickets to Title I schools, introducing students to dance and music, deepening their appreciation for the arts, and fostering the development of important social and emotional skills that affect their overall quality of life.

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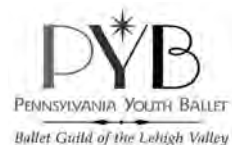
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