

ARTS & THEATER

It's 'Nutcracker' holiday ballet season! Here's your guide to Lehigh Valley shows

By Craig Larimer

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The "Snow Queen" dances with Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and Lehigh Valley Ballet Guild. (HARRY FISHER / The Morning Call)

‘Tis the season to escape to an enchanted evening where dreams come to life — through magical dance. Lehigh Valley productions of “The Nutcracker,” set to the unforgettable music of Tchaikovsky, are a holiday tradition poised to delight all audiences.

The legendary story follows a young girl who falls asleep and envisions a Christmas fantasyland, where her nutcracker has transformed into a handsome prince and dynamic dancers perform for her entertainment.

This year’s shows feature live music, both professional and local dancers, colorful costumes and Christmas trees that magically grow on stage.

Here’s your guide to upcoming holiday productions.





The Candy Cane dance in Pennsylvania Youth Ballet Nutcracker. (Contributed photo)

Pennsylvania Youth Ballet's "The Nutcracker at Zoellner"

Public performances 1 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Dec. 10; and 2 p.m. Dec. 11

Additional school shows are also included 10 a.m. Dec 7, Dec. 8, and Dec. 9

The longest-running "Nutcracker" in the Lehigh Valley returns for its 54th year as Pennsylvania Youth Ballet/Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley fills the Zoellner Arts Center stage featuring more than 100 artists — including guest performers from the Pennsylvania Ballet, Philadelphia; alumni of Pennsylvania Youth Ballet/Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley and local high school talent.

All performances will feature a 48-piece orchestra, the Southside Sinfonietta, under the direction of Eugene Albuлесcu of Lehigh University. Over 80 Lehigh Valley area students will sing Waltz of the Snowflakes and holiday music in the Zoellner lobby before each show.

Guest artists include **Amanda Smith** (Sugar Plum Fairy) principal dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem; **Da' Von Doane** (Sugar Plum Cavalier) from the Dance Theatre of Harlem; **Stephaen Hood** (Snow King, Arabian) dance teacher for Anne Arundel County Public Schools; **Tevin Johnson** (Harlequin, Candy Cane) teacher at City College of Manhattan theater department.

This year will also feature a new Act II backdrop for the Land of Sweets — conceived of and designed by Carl Sprague.

For tickets and info contact zoellnerartscenter.org or 610-758-2787.

More informaion: markjen@ptd.net and zoellnerartscenter.org



Repertory Dance Theatre's production of The Nutcracker at Miller Symphony Hall. (April Gamiz)

Repertory Dance Theatre at Allentown's Miller Symphony Hall

2 p.m. Dec. 3 and Dec. 4

Repertory Dance Theatre's "Nutcracker" returns to Allentown's Miller Symphony Hall under the artistic direction of Jennifer Haltzman Tracy and Trinette Singleton and with live music by the award-winning Allentown Symphony Orchestra.

RDT's special performing guests include **Mari Takayama** (Sugarplum Fairy)

Daniel Mayo who was a professional dancer with Philadelphia based, Ballet X.

The company's pre-professional dancers — along with children and adults from the community — round out the cast.

More information: 610-965-6216 millersymphonyhall.org and repertorydance.org

Nutcracker! Magical Christmas Ballet



Nutcracker! Magic of Christmas Ballet at Easton's State Theatre

7 p.m. Dec. 13

This Christmas, bring the family back to a simpler time with NUTCRACKER! Magic of Christmas Ballet. The acclaimed holiday tradition returns for the 30th Anniversary tour. You can re-live your fondest childhood dreams, overflowing with larger-than-life puppets, breathtaking acrobatics and dazzling costumes.

Experience the exquisite artistry of the international cast, featuring stars of Ukraine ballet, performing at the highest level of classical technique.

More information: statetheatre.org and 610-258-7766