Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Nuts!!! And More Nuts!!!

Ann Haskins · Thursday, November 17th, 2022

For the next five weeks, the *Nutcracker* ballet will fill SoCal stages with enchanted Nutcracker princes, Sugar Plum fairies, dreamy young girls, waltzing flowers, and dancing mice. Shows start this weekend and twirl across SoCal stages through the end of the year.

Two years ago, the *Nutcracker* went missing in 2020. With Covid rampaging, it was too dangerous to gather dancers for the corps de ballets, to assemble children for the party scene, or to open theaters. Last year's efforts found sold out performances vying with cancelled shows as Covid variants infiltrated the ranks of dancers, theater crews, and orchestra members. Vaccination and boosters continue to move forward, making for a hopeful *Nutcracker* season with improved Covid protocols.

Choices range from professional ballet companies to training companies with guest artists to neighborhood dance studios. Jaded critics may groan at the prospect of yet another production of *The Nutcracker,* yet balletomanes welcome the chance to compare various professional full-length versions (this year welcoming back Los Angeles Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Inland Pacific Ballet, Long Beach Ballet, and State Street Ballet). Local training companies afford a peek at the current crop of promising pre-professional dancers and there is a special charm in the joy of ballet schools' budding dancers. Terpsichorean riffs on the tradition are offered by Debbie Allen's *Chocolate Nutcracker,* Pacific Ballet Dance Theatre's excerpts in *Joys of the Season,* American Contemporary Ballet's chamber-sized *Nutcracker Suite,* and the return of LA Unbound's raucous rendition.

With productions from Santa Clarita to San Pedro, Santa Barbara to San Diego, Huntington Beach to the Inland Empire, there's a *Nutcracker* nearby. Even folk who think they don't like ballet find it hard to resist the exquisite, familiar Tchaikovsky score and nostalgic holiday celebration that is the setting for a magical journey.

The following round up starts with some of notable professional endeavors and then a regional sorting. Details, tickets, & Covid protocols at the websites.

This marks the first season for new artistic director Melissa Barak as **Los Angeles Ballet** opens its 16th season with the *Nutcracker* choreographed by the former co-artistic directors Thordal

Christensen and Colleen Neary. Set in 1912 Los Angeles, the production tours metro LA with performances in Glendale, Redondo Beach, Westwood, and Hollywood (with a live orchestra). The approach has proved successful, bringing L.A.'s own professional ballet company to its audience rather than expecting folks to fight gridlocked holiday traffic. The superb company dancers have proven themselves a home team to root for and now has new leadership. At the Alex Theater, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Sat., Dec. 3, 6 pm, Sun., Dec. 4, 2 pm. Also at Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach; Sat., Dec. 10, noon & 5 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, noon. Also at UCLA Royce Hall, Westwood; Fri., Dec. 16, 8 pm, Sat.-Sun., Dec. 17-18, noon & 5 pm. Also at Dolby Theatre, Hollywood & Highland, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Thurs., Dec. 22, 2 pm, Fri., Dec. 23, 2 & 8 pm, Sat., Dec. 24, noon, Mon., Dec. 26, 2 pm, $44-$144, discounts for seniors, students, children under 12 years, & military. Los Angeles Ballet.

Celebrated choreographer Alexei Ratmansky's interpretation of the classic for **American Ballet Theatre** returns with ABT's splendid dancers and now established as this venue's resident ballet company. The announced casting includes many ABT stars including several recently elevated to principal status. A complete listing of lead casting (with the caveat that things might change) is at SCFTA. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Fri., Dec. 9, 7 pm, Sat., Dec. 10 & 17, 2 pm & 7 pm, Sun., Dec 11 & 18, 12:30 & 5:30 pm, Wed.-Thurs., Dec. 14-15, 7 pm, $29-$250. 714-556-2787, SCFTA.

Choreographer Laurence Blake and artistic director Victoria Koenig created **Inland Pacific Ballet**'s version of *The Nutcracker* that has become an Inland Empire tradition. IPB's professional dancers are joined by students from IPB's respected ballet academy. At Lewis Family Playhouse, Victory Gardens Cultural Center, 12505 Cultural Center Dr., Rancho Cucamonga; Sat., Dec. 3 & 10, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 4 & 11, 2 pm., $70-$86 Also at Fox Performing Arts Center, 3801 Mission Inn Ave., Riverside; Sat., Dec. 17, 2 pm & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 18, 2 pm $24-$84, discounts for seniors, students, groups & children 12 & under. Info & tickets at Inland Pacific Ballet.

Over four decades, artistic director David Wilcox' version of the *Nutcracker* for **Long Beach Ballet** has acquired an array of special effects that have performers fly and perform magic. The production boasts a live orchestra and professional guest artists join students from the affiliated ballet school. Terrace Theatre, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach; Fri., Dec. 16, 7:30 pm, Sat., Dec. 17, 2 pm & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 18, 2 pm, Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 22-23, 7:30 pm, $34-$125. Long Beach Nutcracker.

The professional dancers of **State Street Ballet** are joined by students from the associated ballet school in this *Nutcracker* by artistic director Rodney Gustafson. Live music is performed by Opera San Luis Obispo Grand Orchestra. Granada Theater, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara; Sat., Dec. 17, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 18, 2 pm, $26-$106. State Street Ballet.

Formerly known as the Russian Ballet Theater, producers Sasha Gorskaya and Gulya Hartwick's origin intent was to introduce the world to Russian ballet. Understandably that former name became problematic. Under its new name, **World Ballet Series,** the producers are touring a *Nutcracker* production touting 50 dancers, numerous costumes, and Marius Petipa choreography. The Saban Theatre, 8440 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills; Fri.-Sat., Dec. 16-17, 7 pm, $55-$135. Also at La Mirada Theatre,14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada; Tues., Dec. 20, 7 pm, $35-$175. Also at Oxnard Performing Arts Center, Fri., Dec. 23, 7 pm, $35-$89. Also at the Alex Theater, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale, Sat., Dec. 24, 2 pm. $30-$185. World Ballet Series.

Where to find The Nutcracker throughout Southern California

Metro Los Angeles

Los Angeles Ballet UCLA Royce Hall, Westwood; Fri., Dec. 16, 8 pm, Sat.-Sun., Dec. 17, noon & 5 pm. Also at Dolby Theatre, Hollywood & Highland, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Thurs., Dec. 22, 2 pm, Fri., Dec. 23, 2 & 8 pm, Sat., Dec. 24, noon, Mon., Dec. 26, 2pm, $44-$144, discounts for seniors, students, children under 12 years, & military. Los Angeles Ballet.

World Ballet Series—Saban Theatre, 8440 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills; Fri.-Sat., Dec. 16-17, 7 pm, $55-$135. World Ballet Series.

Pacific Ballet Dance Theatre includes *Nutcracker* excerpts in *Joys of the Season.* Pepperdine University, Smothers Theater, Sat., Dec. 10, 8 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, 2:30 pm, $25-$65. Pepperdine University.

American Contemporary Ballet—Debuted in 2017, ACB returns at a new venue with *The Nutcracker Suite*, a one hour, immersive experience. ACB Studios, 926 Sycamore Ave., 6th Flr., Hollywood; Fri., Nov. 25, 8 pm, Sat.-Sun., Nov. 26-27, 2 & 5 pm, then Thur. & Fri., 8 pm, Sat.-Sun., 2 & 5 pm, thru Thurs., Dec. 22, 8 pm, then Fri., Dec. 23, 8 pm, Sat. Dec. 24, 1 pm $100-$140. Details, tickets & Covid protocols at American Contemporary Ballet.

Westside Ballet—Yvonne Mounsey and Rosemary Valaire, the late founders of this respected training company, created a Victorian Christmas card version of the *Nutcracker.* The young dancers perform with the Santa Monica College Symphony. Professional guests share the lead with student dancers. The Broad Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Sat.-Sun., Nov. 26-27 & Dec. 3-4, 1 & 5 pm, Sun., $50. Westside Ballet.

Marat Daukayev Ballet Theatre and School—One-time star of Russia's Kirov (now Mariinsky) Ballet, Marat Daukayev choreographed, directs and stars as the mysterious Uncle Drosselmeyer with students from his ballet academy. Luckman Fine Arts Complex, 5151 State University Dr., East L.A.; Sat., Dec. 10, 2 pm & 7 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, 11:30 am & 4:30 pm, $42-$77. Luckman Arts.

Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley

Los Angeles Ballet—Alex Theater, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Sat., Dec. 3, 6 pm, Sun., Dec. 4, 2 pm.. $44-$144, discounts for seniors, students, children under 12 years, & military. Los Angeles Ballet.

World Ballet Series—Alex Theater, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale, Sat., Dec. 24, 2 pm. $30-$185. World Ballet Series.

Pasadena Dance Theatre—This well-regarded training company returns with new choreography for 2022. American Ballet Theatre guest artists Katherine Williams and Eric Tamm lead the cast of 50 dancers. San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, 320 S. Mission Dr., Pasadena; Thurs., Dec. 22, 2 pm, Fri., Dec. 23, 2 & 6 pm, Sat., Dec. 24, 1 pm., $25-$75. Pasadena Dance Theatre.

LA Unbound takes a light view with *Nutcracker Unbound* at AGBU Performing Arts Center, 2495 E Mountain St., Pasadena; Sat., Dec. 17, 4 pm, $28 & $38. AGBU Performing Arts Center.

Red Chair Children's Production Company—Children age five to 18 take the stage in this family-friendly version. Alex Theatre, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Sat., Dec. 10, 1 & 6 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, 2 pm, $6-$60. Alex Theatre.

South Bay & Long Beach

Hot Chocolate Nutcracker Debbie Allen's take on the classic tale is presented as part of a gala fundraiser at Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach; Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 1-2 7:30 pm, Sat., Dec. 3, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 4, 2 pm, $50-$125. Eventbrite.

Los Angeles Ballet—Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach; Sat., Dec. 10, noon & 5 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, noon. $44-$144, discounts for seniors, students, children under 12 years, & military. Los Angeles Ballet.

Long Beach Ballet—Fri., Dec. 16, 7:30 pm, Sat., Dec. 17, 2 pm & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 18, 2 pm, Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 22-23, 7:30 pm, $34-$125. Long Beach Nutcracker.

Ballet California—Diane Lauridsen's admirable training company, South Bay Ballet, returns after a two-year hiatus with a new name and its popular version of the *Nutcracker.* At Marsee Theater, El Camino College, 16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance; Sat.-Sun., Dec. 17-18, 2 pm., $36. El Camino College.

Palos Verdes Ballet—Norris Theatre, 27570 Norris Center Dr., Rolling Hills Estates; Sat., Dec. 3, 7 pm, Sun., Dec. 4, 1 & 5 pm, $42, $28 children. Palos Verdes Performing Arts.

Pacific Dance Center—Centinela Valley Center for the Arts, 14901 S. Inglewood Blvd., Lawndale; Sat-Sun., Dec. 10-11, 2 pm, $20-$25. Pacific Dance Center, tickets at Shovation.

San Pedro City Ballet—The studio where American Ballet Theatre's Misty Copeland trained showcases its current students. Warner Grand Theater, 478 W. 6th St., San Pedro; Fri., Dec. 9, 7 pm, Sat., Dec. 10, 2 & 7 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, 2 pm, $30-$40. San Pedro City Ballet.

Southern California Dance Theater—Jordan High School, 6500 Atlantic Blvd., Long Beach; Sat., Dec. 10, 7 pm., Sun., Dec. 11, 2 pm, $25. Simpletix.

San Fernando Valley

California Dance Ensemble California Performing Arts Education Center, 2855 W. Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas; Sat., Dec. 17, 2 & 7 pm, Sun., Dec. 18, 1 & 5:30 pm, $22-$40. California Dance Ensemble.

Degas Dance Studio—California Performing Arts Education Center, 2855 W. Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas; Sat., Dec. 3, 5 pm, Sun., Dec. 4, 1 pm, $29-$45. The PAECs.

Ballet Elite—California Performing Arts Education Center, 2855 W. Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas; Sat., Dec. 10, 2 & 7 pm, $22-$25. OvationTix.

Santa Clarita Ballet—College of the Canyons, 26455 Rockwell Canyon Rd., Santa Clarita; Sat., Dec. 17, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 18, 2 pm, $32-$38. Santa Clarita Ballet.

Antelope Valley Ballet—Lancaster Performing Arts Center, 750 W. Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster; Sat., Dec. 10, 2 & 7 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, 2 pm, $25-$30, $15 youth. Lancaster Performing Arts Center.

Orange County

American Ballet Theatre—Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Fri., Dec. 9, 7 pm, Sat., Dec. 10 & 17, 2 pm & 7 pm, Sun., Dec 11 & 18, 12:30 & 5:30 pm, Wed.-Thurs., Dec. 14-15, 7 pm, $29-$250. SCFTA.

Anaheim Ballet—Symphony Irvine provides live music. City National Grove, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim; Fri., Nov. 25, 7 pm, Sat., Nov. 26, 2 & 7 pm, $25-$45. Anaheim Ballet.

Sunrise Ballet—Servite Theater, 1952 La Palma Ave., Anaheim; Sat., Dec. 3, noon & 4 pm, Sun., Dec. 4, noon, $25. Sunrise Ballet.

Festival Ballet Theatre—More than 100 students from Southland Ballet Academy perform in the *Nutcracker* from this respected training company. Announced professional guest stars and their scheduled performances are at Festival Ballet Theatre. Irvine Barclay Theater, 4242 Campus

Drive, Irvine; Sat.-Sun., Dec. 10-11, 17-18, 1 & 6 pm, Tues.-Fri.., Dec. 20-23, 6 pm, Sat., Dec. 24, 11 am, $45-110. The Barclay.

Ballet Repertory Theatre—Golden West College Mainstage Theater, 15751 Gotherd St., Huntington Beach; Sat., Dec. 10 & 17, 2 & 6:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, 1 & 18, 1 & 5 pm, Fri., Dec. 16 & 23, 6:30 pm, Wed., Dec. 21, 6:30 pm, Thurs., Dec. 22, 2 & 6:30 pm, Sat., Dec. 24, 1 pm, $25, $16 students & seniors. Golden West College Main Stage Theater.

Coast City Ballet—Huntington Beach Historic Theater, 1905 Main St., Huntington Beach; Fri., Dec. 16, 7 pm, $17, Sat., Dec. 17, 2 & 7 pm, $25-$27. Coast City Ballet. PurplePass.

Ballet Etudes—Huntington Beach Historic Theater, 1905 Main St., Huntington Beach; Sat., Dec. 3, 2 & 7 pm, Sun., Dec. 4, 2 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, 2 & 7 pm, $30-$40. Ballet Etudes, Etix.

Laguna Ballet—San Juan High School Theater, 29211 San Juan Capistrano; Sat., Dec. 17, 7 pm, Sun., Dec. 18, 6 pm, Wed.-Thurs., Dec. 21-22, 7 pm, $35. Laguna Dance Theatre, tickets at Laguna Ballet.

World Ballet Series—At La Mirada Theatre,14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada; Tues., Dec. 20, 7pm, $35-$175. World Ballet Series.

Ventura/Santa Barbara Counties

State Street Ballet—Granada Theater, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara; Sat., Dec. 17, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 18, 2 pm, $26-$106. State Street Ballet.

Pacific Festival Ballet Company—The resident ballet company of the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza is joined by students and guest artists Tiler Peck and Roman Mejia, New York City Ballet principal dancers. Civic Arts Plaza, Fred Kavli Theater, 2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks; Sat.-Sun., Dec. 17-18, 2 & 7 pm, $35-$57. Pacific Festival Ballet Company, tickets at Ticketmaster.

Ventura County Ballet—Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center, 4235 Mar Vista Dr., Camarillo; Sat., Dec. 3, 2 & 7 pm, Sat., Dec. 10, 3 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, 1 & 5 pm, $30-$40, discounts for children, seniors & military. Ventura County Ballet, Brown Paper Tickets.

Santa Barbara Festival Ballet—Arlington Theater, 1317 State St., Santa Barbara; Sat., Dec. 10, 2:30 & 7 pm, Sun., Dec. 11, 2:30 pm, $35-$58. Santa Barbara Festival Ballet, info at Arlington Theatre.

San Diego County

California Ballet—Poway Center for the Performing Arts, 15498 Espola Rd., Poway, Thurs., Dec. 22, 7 pm, Fri., Dec. 23, 1 & 7 pm, Sat., Dec. 24, 1 pm, $35-$85. California Ballet School, tickets at PCPA.

Golden State Ballet with the San Diego Symphony. San Diego Civic Theatre, 1100 3rd. Ave., San

Diego; Fri., Dec. 16, 7:30 pm, Sat., Dec. 17, 2:30 & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 18, 1 & 5:30 pm, Thurs., Dec. 22, 7:30 pm, Fri., Dec. 23, 5:30 pm. $25-$109. Golden State Ballet.

City Ballet of San Diego—California Center for the Arts, 340 Escondido Blvd., Escondido; Wed., Dec. 21, 7:30 pm, Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 22-23, 2 & 7:30 pm, $30-$103. City Ballet of San Diego.

4S Dance Company—California Center for the Arts, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido; Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 8-9, 7 pm, Sat., Dec. 10, 2:30 & 7 pm, $30-$45. 4S Dance Company.

San Diego Ballet—The Magnolia, 210 E. Main St. El Cajon; Sat., Dec. 17, 1 & 5 p.m., $45-$115. San Diego Ballet.

San Bernardino/Riverside Counties

Inland Pacific Ballet—At Lewis Family Playhouse, Victory Gardens Cultural Center, 12505 Cultural Center Dr., Rancho Cucamonga; Sat., Dec. 3 & 10, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 4 & 11, 2 pm., $70-$86. Also at Fox Performing Arts Center, 3801 Mission Inn Ave., Riverside; Sat., Dec. 17, 2 pm & 7:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 18, 2 pm $24-$84, discounts for seniors, students, groups & children 12 & under. Info & tickets at Inland Pacific Ballet.

David Allan's Nutcracker—Choreographer David Allan's version of "The Nutcracker" is a Riverside staple. Platt College, Brava Studios, 6465 Sycamore Canyon Blvd., Suite 110, Riverside; Sat.-Sun., Dec. 10-11 & 17-18, 1 & 6 pm, $20-30. BRAVA.

Inland Empire Contemporary Ballet—Yucaipa Performing Arts Center, 12062 California St., Yucaipa; Fri., Dec. 2, 7 pm, Sat., Dec. 3, 2 & 6 pm, Sun., Dec. 4, 4 pm, $20-$35. Yucaipa Performing Arts Center.

Inland Dance Theatre—California Theater of the Performing Arts, 562 W. 4th St., San Bernardino; Fri.-Sat., Dec. 9-10, 7 pm. $81-$91. Big Town Tickets.

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