

FROM: **AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE**  
890 Broadway  
New York, New York 10003  
(212) 477-3030

## **THE NUTCRACKER**

### History

The first production of *The Nutcracker*, based on “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King” by E. T. A. Hoffmann (adapted by Alexandre Dumas père), was given by the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg on December 18, 1892 with Antoinetta Dell’Era and Pavel Gerdt as the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier. A ballet in two acts, three scenes, *The Nutcracker* was composed by Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky and choreographed by Lev Ivanov. The first complete version of *The Nutcracker* outside of Russia, under its French title of *Casse-Noisette*, was revived by Nicholas Sergeyev for the Vic-Wells (later Sadler’s Wells, now Royal) Ballet, Sadler’s Wells Theatre, London, January 30, 1934 with Alicia Markova and Harold Turner in the principal roles.

The first full-length production of *The Nutcracker* mounted in North America was by William Christensen for the San Francisco Opera Ballet in 1944. In 1954, George Balanchine choreographed a new version of *The Nutcracker*, based on the original scenario, for New York City Ballet.

The story tells of a Christmas party at which little Clara, daughter of the house, receives the gift of a Nutcracker from Herr Drosselmeyer. She falls asleep and dreams that she watches a battle between the toy soldiers which were another gift, and some mice. The Nutcracker fights the King of the Mice, and Clara saves the Nutcracker by throwing her shoe at the King. The Nutcracker is then transformed into a handsome young Prince who leads her through the Land of Snow and to the Land of Sweets, the home of the Sugar Plum Fairy, where everyone dances in her honor.

(more)

## THE NUTCRACKER History – Page 2

American Ballet Theatre's first production of *The Nutcracker*, choreographed by Mikhail Baryshnikov, received its first performance at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D. C. on December 21, 1976, danced by Marianna Tcherkassky (Clara), Mikhail Baryshnikov (Nutcracker-Prince), Alexander Minz (Drosselmeyer), Warren Conover (Fritz), Gayle Young (Mr. Stahlbaum), Sallie Wilson (Mrs. Stahlbaum) and Marcos Paredes (King of Mice). Baryshnikov's production received its New York premiere at the Metropolitan Opera House on May 18, 1977 with the same cast.

Kevin McKenzie's production of *The Nutcracker* received its World Premiere at the Orange County Performing Arts Center in Costa Mesa, California on December 3, 1993, danced by Yan Chen (Clara), Robert Wallace (Nutcracker-Prince), Victor Barbee (Drosselmeyer), Julie Kent (Sugar Plum Fairy), Robert Hill (Cavalier), Christina Fagundes (Snow Queen) and Kathleen Moore (Dew Drop).

A new staging of McKenzie's *The Nutcracker* was given its World Premiere at the Kennedy Center on December 12, 2000, danced by Sandra Brown (Clara), Angel Corella (Nutcracker-Prince), Julie Kent (Sugar Plum Fairy), Ethan Stiefel (Her Cavalier), Victor Barbee (Drosselmeyer), Gillian Murphy (Snow Queen) and Yan Chen (Dew Drop).

*The Nutcracker*, with choreography by Alexei Ratmansky, was given its World Premiere at the Howard Gilman Opera House, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, New York on December 23, 2010 danced by Gillian Murphy (Clara, The Princess), David Hallberg (Nutcracker, The Prince), Catherine Hurlin (Clara), and Tyler Maloney (The Nutcracker Boy).