

Holiday 2024 news

an association of pre-professional companies — training dancers and shaping minds since 1966

Our Mission: To raise the standards of American ballet through education, performance, and community engagement

Holidays typically mean “The Nutcracker” to ballet companies — but every production is unique, and there are exceptions to every rule



Columbia Dance’s Nutcracker has tutus and Tchaikovsky, magic and mystery – necessary ingredients for all Nutcrackers. However, this one-of-a-kind production also features beavers fighting fur trappers, dancing wapato plants, shipwrecked castaways, and Oregon Trail children arriving via covered wagon as local Fort Vancouver history is weaved into the plot of the classic ballet. Photos from the 2023 production.



FBallet has been busy, not just with Nutcracker.

Company dancers pictured in a television promotion for “The Wizard of Oz,” at left.

Dancers ready for Snow rehearsal, wearing their new Nutcracker dancewear, below.

FBallet presents 4 performances of “The Nutcracker” with a 30+ piece professional orchestra, December 20-22 at the North Dakota State University Festival Concert Hall.

Below, the company in an outreach program in collaboration with the Fargo Public Library.





Central Indiana Dance Ensemble recently finished a choreography weekend with retired Ballet Arkansas dancer Paul Tillman. Paul created a new piece for TBA consideration and Mixed Rep performances in March. The company is in rehearsal with Paul, above.

CIDE is gearing up for the annual performances of "The Nutcracker," which includes a free school performance for over 1,000 Indianapolis public school students. The excited audience of last year's free performance is pictured below.



Mid-Columbia Ballet has completed its first INCLUDE session of the season. INCLUDE = Inspiring, with No Challenges or Limitations, the Universality of Dance Experiences. The course provides dance education and experiences to all people regardless of their abilities. MCB also presents a sensory-friendly Nutcracker performance to the community free of charge.



In this year's Nutcracker, MCB is happy to have six of their own dancers dancing the major pas de deux: Clara and Nutcracker Prince, Snow Queen and King and Sugar Plum and Cavalier.



Peninsula Dance Theatre is presenting its 49th "Nutcracker" to Kitsap County, Washington this season! Public performances include a full live symphony orchestra, and the production features costumes built by a team of talented seamstresses.



San José Dance Theatre has been very busy rehearsing their Nutcracker production, and have also been active with outreach programs. Artistic Director Brooke Wertwijn led a Nutcracker story time at a local children's bookstore, pictured at right. SJDT performed at Zohar for their series 9, which is a collaboration of several local dance groups. They are looking forward to upcoming outreach performances at Enchante, San Jose and Santana Row, Spirit of the Row.



North Coast Ballet California and Petaluma School of Ballet are preparing for their 38th annual Nutcracker performances. They have a cast of 116 with 6 graduating seniors. They are thrilled to have a new growing Christmas tree, new doll choreography and brand new lamb costumes. NCBC is looking forward to four packed houses to usher in the most wonderful time of the year!



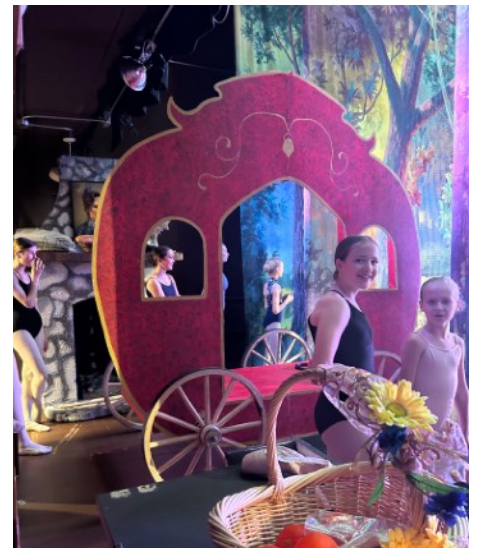
Whidbey Island Dance Theatre eagerly anticipates their upcoming Nutcracker performances, and are excited to share an update on backstage preparations. Their snow cave, a crucial element of the Snow Scene, is currently undergoing a transformation from construction to painting. WIDT would like to thank Derek Hoshiko, the dedicated parent of a WIDT junior company dancer, for his invaluable contributions to this project (pictured below). In addition, the large tree pictured on the right will reach 14 feet once it is in place.



Santa Barbara Festival Ballet will present Nutcracker at the historic Arlington Theater. SBFB welcomes guest artists from Dance Theater of Harlem: Alexandra Hutchinson and Kouadia Davies as the Sugar Plum and Cavalier, below, and Kobe Atwood Courtney and Ariana Dickerson, who will perform the Arabian variation.



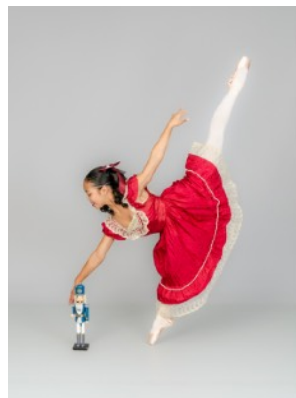
Heartland Youth Ballet performed The Glass Slipper, a Cinderella story, on November 23.



Ballet 45 performed their 8th Nutcracker the weekend before Thanksgiving, presenting 2 performances at the Poway Center of the Performing Arts.



Studio photos by Holly Ireland

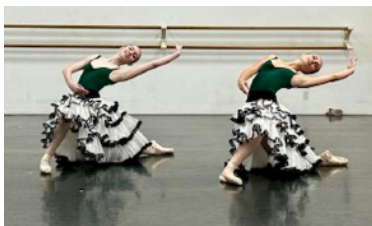


The company dancers in a September photo shoot on the beach

Ballet Yuma is busily at work putting the final touches on their upcoming 30th annual presentation of "The Nutcracker."



Ballet Yuma holds an open casting call for young dancers across their local community for their performances. The majority of the children's roles will be performed by dancers from Ballet Yuma's school, Yuma Ballet Academy.



Bay Area Youth Ballet hosted its first "Ballet With The Big Kids" event. Thirty children joined company class and got to see what an advanced ballet class is like. In addition to observing classwork, participants worked with BAYB company dancers in teams to learn new steps. The highlight of the evening was learning all about pointe shoes!

BAYB features a cast of 70 dancers in their annual Nutcracker production.



Idaho Regional Ballet dancers have been working hard towards bringing The Nutcracker to life, and Artistic Director Liz Keller is proud of their progress.

Photos by Jenn Morgan, Glen Hush Photography.



The Ballet Alliance is fortunate to have a unique scholarship opportunity, courtesy of the **Maple Peace Love Sunshine Fund**. This scholarship is facilitated through the generosity of former TBA Artistic Director Charles Maple, and awards money through a trust established in the memory of his sister Claudia Maple. Before she passed, Claudia wanted to make sure her resources were utilized in caring for others. While Claudia had many philanthropic interests, she was very passionate about ballet. She saw the power ballet has to enrich, empower, and engage people. She wanted to be a force and a vehicle through which young dancers could take great steps toward achieving their goals as pre-professional and professional dancers.



Dancers must first be recommended by their Artistic Director to be considered for a MPLSF scholarship award. They must possess exceptional artistic and athletic potential, have a passion for dance and a relentless drive for the pursuit of perfection in dance, show promise for further outstanding achievement, and demonstrate a commitment to "give back." Charles Maple will award scholarships at Festival, after watching the nominees in the audition, other classes and performances. The awarded funds can be used toward any ballet-related expenses. Last year's awardees were Salma from Mid-Columbia Ballet, and Annie and Kellen, both from Idaho Regional Ballet.

Next Generation Spotlight



Mallory Morrison is a dedicated dance educator and business leader with a deep-rooted passion in the arts. Trained at Bremerton Dance Center, she joined Peninsula Dance Theatre as a dancer in 1998. Her dance education was further enriched through summer intensives and The Ballet Alliance.

In 2008, Morrison graduated from Central Washington University with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Following in her grandmother Lawan Morrison's footsteps, she became the Artistic Director of Peninsula Dance Theatre in 2013, continuing the legacy of the company founded in 1973.

Committed to professional growth, Morrison actively pursues ongoing education in business, nonprofit management, and dance technique. Her dedication to fostering a thriving dance environment has been recognized with community awards, including the Kitsap Sun's 20 Under 40 in 2015 and the YWCA's Women of Achievement for Arts, Culture, and Design in 2016.



Supported by Assistant Artistic Director Nicole Cisler, Morrison is dedicated to evolving Peninsula Dance Theatre while preserving its rich history. Her focus is on creating meaningful connections within the dance community while maintaining the highest standards of excellence.

Clockwise from top left: Mallory in the studio with her students, in a studio portrait, in performance of "A Final Gathering" by Lara Littlefield, with her grandmother and founding PDT Artistic Director Lawan Morrison in 2012, as Juliette in "Romeo and Juliette," and as Giselle in "Giselle." Performance photos are with Peninsula Dance Theatre.



Featured Alumni



Rachel Gehr



Lily Cong

Central Indiana Dance Ensemble alumna Rachel Gehr is in her fifth season with Ballet Arizona. While attending Jacob's School of Music at Indiana University, she was awarded the Premiere Young Artist Scholarship Award. Rachel is pictured in "Emeralds" by George Balanchine, photographed by Rosalie O'Connor.

Ballet Yuma alumna Lily Cong is in her second season with Saint Louis Dance Theatre. She earned a BFA in Dance from the University of Arizona, along with two minors in Math and Global Education. She wishes to thank her mentors at Ballet Yuma as well as The Ballet Alliance for helping her to achieve her dream. Lily is pictured in "The Calling" by Jessica Lang, photographed by Kelly Pratt. [@lily.cong](https://www.instagram.com/lily.cong)

The Ballet Alliance Evaluation Process

At the beginning of February, TBA member companies will send video footage of pieces to their assigned Festival Artistic Director. The FAD will choose works for performance, including emerging choreography pieces. Each FAD will have consultations with the member Artistic Directors, during which the scenario and schedule for in-person Evaluations will be discussed and decided. Each FAD builds a relationship with their directors, facilitating professional guidance and mentorship. This Evaluation process has proven valuable for all participants, especially the dancers of member companies.

Evaluation Tours 2025

Nicholas Ade:	Tuesday, March 4 Wednesday, March 5 Thursday, March 6 Saturday, March 8 Sunday, March 9	Central Indiana Dance Ensemble Heartland Youth Ballet FMBallet Mid-Columbia Ballet Idaho Regional Ballet	Carmel, Indiana Omaha, Nebraska Fargo, North Dakota Tri-Cities, Washington Eagle, Idaho
Melody Mennite:	Thursday, March 6 Friday, March 7 Saturday, March 8 Sunday, March 9 Monday, March 10 Tuesday, March 11	Ballet Yuma Ballet 4S Santa Barbara Festival Ballet State Street Ballet Young Dancers Paso Robles Chamber Ballet San José Dance Theatre	Yuma, Arizona San Diego, California Santa Barbara, California Santa Barbara, California Paso Robles, California San Jose, California
Lisa Slagle:	Tuesday, March 4 Wednesday, March 5 Friday, March 7 Saturday, March 8 Sunday, March 9 Monday, March 10	Peninsula Dance Theatre Whidbey Island Dance Theatre Columbia Dance North Coast Ballet California Juline Regional Youth Ballet Bay Area Youth Ballet	Bremerton, Washington Whidbey Island, Washington Vancouver, Washington Petaluma, California Modesto, California South San Francisco, California