

# OREGON BALLET THEATRE

## CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

M E D I A R E L E A S E

*CELEBRATE THE STARS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOODS AT GEORGE BALANCHINE'S THE NUTCRACKER*  
*Timbers Players, Community Champions and Neighborhood Choirs Join Dancers (Young and Old) in*  
*celebrating the season through Christmas Eve at the Keller Auditorium.*

**November 11, 2011 – PORTLAND, OR.** From a Marie discovered through OBT's Outreach Program to a Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier making their new homes in Oregon; from OBT Orchestra members playing Celestas (a special kind of miniature piano) to choirs caroling before the shows; and with special guest stars from communities all around Portland, ***George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*** offers Oregon families an opportunity to celebrate the stars in their own neighborhoods, December 10 through 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Keller Auditorium.

### DATES AND TIMES

*George Balanchine's The Nutcracker* opens on **Saturday, December 10, 2011** and runs for 14 performances through **Saturday December 24, 2011**. Show times:

Saturday, December 10 at 2:00 pm*	Tuesday, December 20 at 7:30 pm*
Sunday, December 11 at 6:30 pm	Wednesday, December 21 at 2:00 pm
Saturday, December 17 at 2:00 pm*	Wednesday, December 21 at 7:30 pm*
Sunday, December 18 at 1:00 pm *	Thursday, December 22 at 2:00 pm
Sunday, December 18 at 5:30 pm	Friday, December 23 at 2:00 pm
Monday, December 19 at 7:30 pm*	Friday, December 23 at 7:30 pm*
Tuesday, December 20 at 2:00 pm	Saturday, December 24 at noon

\*indicates a performance featuring the full OBT ORCHESTRA

### TICKET PRICES

Tickets start at \$21.00 Visit [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org) or dial **503.2.BALLET (503.222.5538)** for tickets.

Oregon Ballet Theatre also participates in the **Arts for All** programs, providing \$5 tickets to patrons with the Oregon Trail Card.

Each year, dancers from the School of OBT aspire to be selected for featured roles in *The Nutcracker*. This year, North Portland resident **Elvis Lopez** and Vancouver resident **Veyonce Ratcliff**, both discovered through the OBT L.A.B. (Learn about Ballet) program, will step into the spotlight in the roles of Marie and Fritz at select performances. OBT L.A.B. introduces core dance concepts and scouts talent for our scholarship programs in underserved neighborhoods throughout the region. Elvis and Veyonce join young dancers from Lake Oswego to Estacada, each taking their turns in the spotlight in these iconic roles.

Joining them onstage will be Oregon Ballet Theatre's full company, including 10 new dancers from around the world. Of special note, newly arrived married principal dancers **Yang Zou** and **Haiyan Wu** are scheduled to dance together as the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier at select performances.

### FEATURED COMMUNITY GUESTS

This year, each performance will feature walk-on roles of local community champions, ranging from **Timbers player Michael Chabala** and trainer **Beto Angulo** to school principals and favorite teachers to non-profit Executive Directors like Creative Advocacy Network head **Jessica Jarrett**.

In addition, audience members will be greeted outside the Keller Auditorium at each performance with carols from community choirs ranging from the **Astoria North Coast Chorale** to the **Rose City Carolers**.

And last but most certainly not least, the role of **Mother Ginger** will again be performed at select performances by Kevin Cook, aka local drag queen and philanthropist **Poison Waters**.

#### ABOUT GEORGE BALANCHINE'S *THE NUTCRACKER*

*The Nutcracker* was commissioned in 1891 from P.I. Tchaikovsky by Marius Petipa (choreographer of the Russian Imperial Ballet), who began the ballet's creation but became ill and passed it on to his assistant Lev Ivanov to complete. The libretto was created by Ivan A. Vsevolozhsky from E.T.A. Hoffman's *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* (1816), adapted by Alexander Dumas père as *Casse-Noisette*. The ballet debuted December 18, 1892 at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, with Czar Alexander III in attendance.

The first US production of *The Nutcracker* debuted at San Francisco Ballet, December 24, 1944, with choreography by Willam Christensen. Mr. Christensen was trained in Portland and taught in the city until 1937, when he left for California to lead San Francisco Ballet. Christensen's *Nutcracker* was inspired by a conversation with George Balanchine and Alexandra Danilova; the two described the original Maryinsky production to him when they were passing through San Francisco with the famed Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo.

**George Balanchine** (1904-1983) studied at the Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg (Maryinsky) from 1913 – 1921 where he danced the role of the Nutcracker Prince in the Petipa/Ivanov *Nutcracker*. Balanchine founded New York City Ballet in 1948 and debuted his own *Nutcracker* - his first full length story ballet - at City Center on February 2, 1954. It became a huge success, creating a decades-long holiday tradition for all New Yorkers and igniting a still-thriving *Nutcracker* craze throughout the United States and Canada. CBS-TV broadcast the ballet live, nationwide, on Christmas Night in 1957 and 1958 (with narration by June Lockhart), and it was made into a Warner Brothers movie with Macauley Culkin as the Nutcracker/Prince in 1994. Oregon Ballet Theatre remains the only company on the West Coast licensed to perform Balanchine's version of *The Nutcracker*.

For **high-resolution images** from past Oregon Ballet Theatre productions of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*, visit **OBT's Flickr page** <http://www.flickr.com/photos/oregonballettheatre>.

Oregon Ballet Theatre's 2011/12 season is funded in part by the **Regional Arts & Culture Council** and Work for Art; the **Oregon Arts Commission**; the **Oregon Cultural Trust**; **The Oregonian** and **Kink.fm**

#### ABOUT OREGON BALLET THEATRE

Founded in 1989, OBT is the region's largest full-time professional ballet company. Christopher Stowell joined the company as Artistic Director in 2003. Since then, OBT has added over 50 ballets to its repertoire, including nearly two dozen world premieres; providing a compelling and diverse five-program season of work that reflects the broadest spectrum of what great ballet can be. Annually, OBT offers eleven experiential arts education programs for youth and adults, as well as a professional ballet school for students, ages 4-18. Through all the programs offered, OBT reached over 145,000 members of the community last year. For more information about OBT go to: [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org).

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