



2011 Nutcracker Parent Guide



Congratulations on being cast in Ballet Theatre Company's 2011 production of *The Nutcracker!* 2011 marks the 10th year that Ballet Theatre Company (BTC) has staged this magical ballet. We hope that you and your family will enjoy being part of our production.

We have created this guide to acquaint parents of all Nutcracker participants with the process – from communication to rehearsals to closing night. We hope that you will take the time to read the following materials carefully as we have attempted to address many questions parents often have. This guide should help you to be fully informed about the production and help you participate confidently in this year's production. If you have any questions that are not addressed here, please visit our website, dancebtc.org or send email to dance@dancebtc.org.

What to Expect in General

The Nutcracker offers a tremendous opportunity for your child to participate in a full scale professional ballet production. Your child will have an opportunity to perform in front of friends, family, and the greater Hartford community, while gaining confidence, learning responsibility, observing professional dancers, and having fun.

This production develops over three months and it is remarkable what the children learn during that period. Past experience has taught us that at times things may feel hectic or chaotic. We ask that you trust that it all comes together in the end – and as they say – “That’s the nature of show business.” Should you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask Tracy Dorman (tracy@dancebtc.org), Executive Director, Lisa Greene (lisa@dancebtc.org), Parent Liaison, or any returning parent.

What's new this year

The Nutcracker in addition to performing at Hoffman Auditorium in West Hartford (SJC) will be adding a performance at the Hyde Cultural Center in Woodstock, Connecticut (P/Arts) on December 10th, the week before our Hoffman Auditorium performance. This is a one day event and an exciting opportunity for your dancer(s) to perform in a larger venue with a seating capacity of just over 1,000.

Communication

Email and our website will be the primary vehicles for general communication with dancers and parents. If you have not already done so, please provide your E-mail address to Lisa Greene. All information collected at the audition has been entered into our registration system. Please go on online at login.dancebtc.org to verify your contact information. If this is your first time in the system, please click on, “I don't know my password” and a password will be emailed to you. It is important that we have mobile phone numbers wherever possible, in case we need to contact you in an emergency, or if we need your child to substitute with a different cast due to illness, etc.

Rehearsals are posted on our website, www.dancebtc.org and in the lobby of the studio. Please follow the link labeled *Nutcracker Rehearsal Schedule*. We will communicate any

last minute changes to the schedule via email as well, but encourage you to check our website regularly for updates.

If you any questions, you may contact Tracy or call the studio at 860-570-0440. Once the production moves into the theater on 12/9, messages left at the number listed above may not be picked up until the next day.

Casting

All casting is tentative until a final list is distributed, likely in November. Several roles have been double cast depending on the numbers needed for each role. During rehearsals, if your child’s cast is not rehearsing, we ask that he/she sit quietly and observe the other cast. This helps children better learn the choreography. To help you understand when your child will be on stage, below is a synopsis of scenes.

Act I	
Prologue	Clara and her family, Maids, Guests – parents, Clara and Fritz’ friends,, junior and petite party children, Drosselmeyer, Grand Parents, Dolls
Battle Scene	Big Mice & Baby Mice, Infantry, Cavalry, Rangers, Nutcracker Prince, Snow Angels
Snow Scene	Snow King & Queen, Snow Flakes, Clara & Prince, Reindeer pulling Sleigh with Clara & Prince
Act II - Prologue	Angels, Clara & Prince, Snow Angels
Land of the Sweets	Heralds, Clara & Prince, Sugar Plum Fairy, Crown Carriers, Candy Carriers, Bakers, Variations (Chinese Tea, Spanish, Merlitons, Arabian , Russian , Polichinelles), Waltz of Flowers, Sugar Plum & Cavalier, Finale

Cast A performances are at (SJC): Wednesday, 12/14, Friday, 12/16 and Sunday, 12/18 (both performances).

Cast B performances are: Saturday 12/10 (P/Arts), Thursday, 12/15 and Saturday, 12/17 both performances.

Our snow date for the SJC Performances is Monday 12/19

Rehearsal Schedule

Rehearsals will be held at BTC’s Studio until the tech rehearsals on 12/10 at P/Arts and 12/12 at SJC.

Specific rehearsal times by roles are posted on our website and updates are emailed weekly. While we will try to adhere to the preliminary schedule, changes may occur based on how rehearsals are progressing. We ask that parents and dancers be flexible as these needs arise. In the final weeks of rehearsal, additional rehearsals may be scheduled for certain roles, as needed.

We will have one Sunday rehearsal this year – Sunday November 27th. This is the Sunday after Thanksgiving. The professional dancers will be traveling to BTC for a full run through in the BTC studio with the children. To the extent that your travel plans allow, we ask that you make every effort to attend this rehearsal.

Tech and Dress Rehearsals

For Woodstock (P/Arts, Hyde Cultural Center 150 Route 169, Woodstock, Connecticut)

Tech rehearsal and dress for the performance in Woodstock will take place on Saturday December 10th. Please plan to be at the theater by 9 am.

For SJC/West Hartford (1678 Asylum Ave # 1 West Hartford, Connecticut)

This year we will have two rehearsal days in the theater. On Monday December 12th we will have a tech rehearsal. All dancers, production crew, and chaperones are required to attend. We will begin at 4pm. Tech rehearsal is used to set lighting and for dancers to transfer their roles to the stage. Chaperones also learn their roles and cues. Both casts will rehearse. We will make every effort to release children by 8pm at the latest.

The dress rehearsal will take place on Tuesday December 13th. Both casts will have a dress rehearsal on this day. To ensure that both casts have a full dress rehearsal and to avoid a late night for the children, one cast will rehearse from 3:30-5:30 and the other cast from 6-8pm. To make this happen we will need dancers in the first dress rehearsal to arrive at the theater by 3pm so that they can be in costume and ready to begin the rehearsal at 3:30. We realize that this may require an early dismissal from school and we apologize in advance for any inconvenience. In the past we have not always had the opportunity to run full dress rehearsals for both casts which had an impact on the production. In addition, we are working hard to ensure the children are dismissed in a timely manner so that they can get adequate rest.

If your child typically participates in a Winter concert, pageant, etc., at either school or other organization, please check the dates for those performances now to ensure that there are no conflicts.

Rehearsal Guidelines:

- 1) **Rehearsals begin on time; please arrive at least 10 minutes before schedule time. Cast members are to be dressed and ready (hair up and off the face, bangs pinned back) when rehearsals begin.** No warm-ups and baggy clothing are allowed in the studio or auditorium at any time.
- 2) If your child is ill, please do not send them to rehearsal. However, if your child is not feeling well but is still functional, please send him/her and they may sit and watch the rehearsal. In either case, a call should be made to the office in advance (860-570-0440). You may leave a voice mail message.
- 3) Parents should be prepared to have their dancer stay for the entire rehearsal.
- 4) As a rule, dancers are allowed one absence. BTC recognizes that dancers may be ill from time-to-time and that there may be family and school conflicts. If you know that you have a major conflict, please bring it to Tracy's attention, as soon as you are aware of it.
- 5) No eating or drinking while in the studio or in costume at any time. Food and drink may only be consumed in the lobby area and while not in costume.

- 6) Hang coats on the coat hooks and leave wet shoes and boots on the boot trays. Use the dance cubbies for dance bags, clothes, etc. The lobby can get very crowded during rehearsals.
- 7) Toys and books are there for everyone's enjoyment. Please put them back on the shelves before you leave.
- 8) Please leave the lobby area better than you found it. BTC wants to "be green", bring a water bottle, we do not provide paper cups.

Mentors

We will be continuing our popular mentoring program this year. All returning Nutcracker dancers who are 10 years of age and older will be assigned younger "buddies" from the cast. These mentors will be assigned by the end of October. The mentor program offers a wonderful opportunity for building relationships between younger and older dancers. It is also exciting for younger dancers to see their mentors hard at work during rehearsals. These dancers are great role models for younger dancers, as they all exhibit exceptional discipline in their ability to maintain strong grades in school while balancing a busy dance schedule. This program also enables the older dancers to act as friends and role models to the younger dancers.

Parking

BTC's parking lot has a limited number of spaces. Please park only in marked spaces in our lot. If parking space is not available in the lot, park on the street and obey street signs. Remember, there are many children in the area, drive slowly.

Please do not park along the railing in the parking lot; this space is reserved for our neighbor's florist and catering delivery vehicles. Also, please do not park in the adjacent lot, your vehicle may be towed.

Tickets

Saint Joseph College (SJC) general ticket prices are \$30 for adults, \$25 for seniors (age 60+), and \$20 for children (12 and younger). You may purchase tickets tickets.dancebtc.org. We do our own ticketing for Saint Joseph College (SJC) and the Hyde Cultural Center will sell tickets through their own system.

As part of our 10th Anniversary celebration, the SJC Friday night performance will also be Alumnae night. In addition to the general public, we will be inviting former cast members to purchase tickets for this performance, and we will include a special recognition at curtain call. As many of our alumni are teenagers, we will be setting aside about 75 tickets, for the Friday night performance only, at a special student rate of \$20 for anyone under the age of 18 or for students with an id. This price is open to all students, not just alumnae of BTC's Nutcracker.

Last year our SJC performances were near sell-out. All seating for SJC is reserved, so purchase your tickets early. For those unfamiliar with the SJC theater it is an open plan with no viewing obstructions. Limited seating and tickets are available at the SJC box office, one hour prior to performance.

If possible, please submit your SJC ticket order in person or over the phone by calling 860-570-0440. We are charged a fee for web-orders.

As a rule, there are no exchanges or refunds on general ticket sales. However, we do make an exception for cast members based casting and family needs. It is difficult to make any exchanges after December 9th.

Budget and Fundraising

For those parents new to The Nutcracker, it may be a surprise to learn that this production costs more than \$125,000. We have 7 performances open to the public plus one outreach performance for underserved children from the greater Hartford community. Our costs include theater rental, insurance, lighting equipment, guest artist fees, publicity, etc. Ticket sales cover only about 40% of these costs. The balance is covered by donations, fundraising programs, grants, advertisers, and production fees.

Fundraising Programs

Lyman Pies, Cookie Dough, and Taste Coupon Book

This year we are enhancing our annual pie sale with the Taste Coupon Book. There are many people in the community who enjoy Lyman pies and cookie dough, but we have noticed over the past few years that the market for Lyman Pies has become fairly saturated – a lot of people are selling them!

The Taste Coupon book sells for \$20. For each book sold, BTC receives \$10! The book is customized to the Greater Hartford area and contains some great offers – really! Those purchasing the Taste Coupon Book, they can easily recoup their investment in a very short time.

And Lyman Orchard pies and cookie dough are delicious. BTC receives 40% of the revenue generated from these sales. These pies are delicious and will be delivered the Saturday before Thanksgiving (11/19). They are a perfect item for the holiday season.

Last year, we earned almost \$4,000 from the pie sale. Our goal this year is \$6,000. If each cast member family sells **20** items we will off-set our production costs by \$8,000. This year we will again offer our free ticket incentive - for every 20 items your family sells, you will receive 1 complimentary ticket to any of the SJC Nutcracker performances. The top 3 sellers (\$) will also receive an additional prize.

Halloween Party

To enable the cast to get to know each other better and to give children a fun and safe place to celebrate Halloween, BTC will be hosting a Halloween party in the studio on Friday October 28th from 6-8pm. More details to come.

Program Ads:

We offer reasonably priced advertisements for our program. Advertisers have an opportunity to be listed in our program, on our website, and promoted at our events. Our goal this year is to sell \$6,000 in ad sales. We ask each family to try to sell one full-page ad.

Dancer Recognition Page:

The dancer recognition page allows you, friends, and other family members to honor a dancer with a special personal message. For \$20, submit up to 25 words of recognition to honor your dancer.

Sponsorships

BTC offers individual and corporate sponsorships programs with additional benefits. Individual and corporations have the opportunity to support dance in the greater Hartford community and BTC's outreach programs benefiting underserved children. Please feel free to contact an organization directly, or forward contacts to Lisa Greene or Doug Eicher. We would be happy to work with you or directly with a potential sponsor.

Events

As part of the Nutcracker cast you may be invited to participate in a number of events associated with the performance. These include:

- Park Road Parade – October 1st
- West Hartford Holiday Stroll – December 1, 5:30-8:30pm
- Festival of Trees – December TBD (December 3 – Sunday, December 12)

The Park Road parade is a fun event for the dancers because they have an opportunity to wear performance costumes. If you are interested in marching with us, please email Tracy to make arrangements for a costume and to obtain directions to our meeting place. We typically meet at 9:30am near the parade route. Costumes will need to be returned to Tracy or to the studio after the parade. Parents are welcome to march with us and to help carry the BTC banner. Details for the December events will be posted on our website.

Volunteering

To contain costs, we rely on volunteers for a number of key roles throughout the production. During rehearsals, we may ask waiting parents to assist with costume sorting, ironing, or other small projects. Move in, set up as well as tear down are very important to the overall production. And, on any given performance night during the production, we need volunteers for backstage crew, ushers, and chaperones. Parents have typically enjoyed getting involved in this capacity, and we ask that you review the detailed list of volunteer roles. We are asking each family to commit to chaperoning or ushering plus one other volunteer role. The more volunteers we have, the more smoothly the entire production runs, and the more enjoyable the experience is for your dancer and everyone else involved. Please sign up to help!

The Nutcracker Team

Tracy Dorman - Executive Director, Ballet Theatre Company

Tracy Dorman has been with Ballet Theatre Company since its founding in 1999 and has been Executive Director since 2005. Tracy has played a major role in the Company's artistic and organizational development while also overseeing grant writing, finance, and administration on an everyday basis. She has extensive experience as a dancer, choreographer, administrator, and dance educator. She has also earned numerous awards for scenic and costume design, photography, and arts advocacy.

Roman Baca – Artistic Director

Mr. Baca graduated from the Nutmeg Conservatory and majored in dance at the University of New Mexico, where he was honored to be a dancer in Anthony Tudor's Dark Elegies set

by Donald Mahler. Roman is also a recipient of a 2009 producing and presenting grant from the Ajkun Ballet Theatre, a 2010 Access Dance Scholarship from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and a Connecticut Veteran Wartime Medal.

Lisa Greene –

Lisa lives in West Hartford, is BTC co-chair, dancer parent, and dedicated volunteer. Lisa focuses much of her time in marketing and is a key parent liaison. Her daughter Alison is a member of the BTC Junior Company and has been dancing with BTC since 2006. Her daughter Jackie, who prefers soccer and swimming, can often be found helping out in and around the studio.

Doug Eicher –

Doug lives in West Hartford, is BTC co-chair, dancer parent, and dedicated volunteer. Doug focuses much of his time in helping to improve BTC's fiscal wellness, web presence, and registration systems. Doug also serves on the Board of Directors for the Interlochen Center for the Arts. Doug's daughter Hayley is a member of the BTC Junior Company and has been dancing with BTC since 2003. Hayley's sister Julie is a dancer at the University of Cincinnati and started as a dancer with BTC in 1998. Lauren, her oldest sister recently graduated from Boston University as a Theater major.

Catherine Savino, - Costume Designer,

Catherine graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. After a successful career designing and producing children's clothing in the garment center of New York City as well as in Asia, Catherine shifted her focus to the theater. She has designed costumes for Simsbury Light Opera Company and has been a designer and patternmaker for Goodspeed Opera House, Hartford Ballet, Connecticut Repertory Theater, and Connecticut Opera.

Howard G. Kirsner - Lighting Designer

Howard, in addition to lighting is the primary point of contact for Saint Joseph College during our week in the theater. Howard studied at Brandeis University and the University of Pennsylvania and served as technical director and resident lighting designer for The Cabaret Company and Mark Twain Masquers. Mr Kirsner has worked with The Bushnell, Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, The Hartt School, University of Hartford, and many other productions and venues.

Closer to Production and In the Theaters:

The Theater:

The Nutcracker will be staged at the Hoffman Auditorium in the Bruyette Athenaeum in the Carol Autorino Center for the Arts and Humanities at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford (1678 Asylum Avenue) and at the Performing Arts of NECT at Hyde Cultural Center 150 Route 169, Woodstock, Connecticut.

Dancers in Act I, should plan to arrive 60-90 minutes before the start of a show. Dancers in Act II, should plan to arrive 15 minutes before the start of a show.

Due to limited space in the dressing rooms and backstage, the younger dancers are provided their own space in an upstairs classroom. The room is accessible from the front staircase in the foyer.

Dancers will be assigned a section in the room, by role, for their belongings. In addition to make-up, shoes, and tights, dancers should bring quiet activities as there will be a “down time” while they wait their turn on stage.

For security and safety reasons, parents are to walk the children in to the theater and sign them in with the on-duty chaperone. Parents must also check-out children when they pick them up. There is no exception to this rule.

Once patrons begin to arrive, dancers should remain in their dressing area. They are not to wander the lobby in costume. Dancers should remain as QUIET as possible at all times.

Costumes:

Costumes will be provided by Ballet Theatre Company and remain the property of the Company. Costumes are to be treated with care and are to be returned to their appropriate hanger following each dress rehearsal and performance. A fee will be assessed for any costumes that are lost or damaged beyond normal wear and tear.

Dancers are required to provide their own tights and performance quality ballet slippers. Specifics regarding tights and shoes will be provided in November. Many roles also require a tan/nude leotard to be worn under the costume. These can be found at most dance outlets. This information will also be provided in November.

Some roles require either black or white shoes. Ballet Theatre Company has a number of pairs from previous performances that may be borrowed; please check with Tracy or Lisa. Also – if returning dancers have pairs from previous years that they are willing to donate, please see us.

Mice and baby mice typically require grey shoes. Dancers need to provide shoes which will be dyed by BTC. While we have some pairs available from previous years for use, if your child is a mouse or baby mouse and is close to outgrowing his/her current shoes, you may consider holding on to them and using this pair this role.

Reminder – absolutely NO eating, drinking, drawing, or coloring while in costume.

Make-up and Hair

Make-up is not required for rehearsals, with the exception of dress rehearsal. We typically hold a hair and make-up session towards the end of the rehearsal schedule. At this point we will review how a child’s hair is to be styled and will cover make-up application for different roles. You may also see videos on the BTC website.

In general, we ask that dancers arrive to the theater with their make-up already applied. This reduces the risk of damage to costumes. Dancers should still bring their make-up to the performance so that touch ups can be done as needed. The primary exception to this rule is Polichinelles, who will have their make-up applied by the parents on duty.