

Education and Outreach Department's School Matinee Program

The NUTCRACKER

STUDY GUIDE

For Teachers and Students

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About NEVADA BALLET THEATRE

Now in its 47th Season, Nevada Ballet Theatre (NBT) continues to bring the Las Vegas community closer to the art form of dance. With professional Company productions at The Smith Center for the Performing Arts, where it is the Resident Ballet Company, an affiliated Ballet and Dance Academy, as well as numerous Education and Outreach programs, NBT is at the heart of Las Vegas' cultural landscape.

The vision of a professional ballet company based in Las Vegas was brought to life in 1972 when Vassili Sulich, then the principal dancer with the Tropicana Hotel and Casino's famed Folies Bergere, gathered a group of ballet dancers from the Las Vegas Boulevard entertainment industry and presented a series of dance concerts to an enthusiastic public at the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) Performing Arts Center's Judy Bayley Theatre. The overwhelmingly positive reception of the community, combined with the support of UNLV, was such that within two years a volunteer board was established—headed by founding chairman and former dancer, Nancy Houssels. And during the next 25 years, a professional ballet company emerged.

In 1979, the Company established an affiliated Academy in order to provide a premier dance education to young people in Southern Nevada and groom the next generation of dance enthusiasts. After the organization received a major grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, and a donation of land from The Howard Hughes Corporation, plans for a world-class home for the Company and Academy began. The Academy is now regarded as one of the top ballet and dance training centers in the city and offers a variety of classes for children through adult. In 1980, the Company expanded its community reach by sharing the art form of dance with students in underserved populations within Clark County. In 1993, it established *Future Dance* in order to provide free in-school dance instruction and scholarship opportunities to students in need. Now in its 26th School Year, *Future Dance* is one of the longest running Education and Outreach programs in the state. With all of its Education and Outreach initiatives combined, NBT successfully reaches over 20,000 students a year through these life-changing programs.

NBT's long-awaited residency at The Smith Center for the Performing Arts became a reality on May 5, 2012, during the Company's 40th Anniversary. That same year, NBT presented a brand-new and original production of *The Nutcracker* choreographed by James Canfield. Complete with new sets, costumes and full orchestra, it is the first production of its kind built for the Reynolds Hall stage.

With a solid focus on dance education, a versatile Company of professional dancers and a growing repertoire, NBT stands as one of the city's most beloved community treasures. Consistently seeking to engage new audiences and cultivate its national identity, unique dance experiences like *A Choreographers' Showcase (ACS)*, NBT's annual collaboration with *Cirque du Soleil*, create avenues of growth for local artists while providing the community with new and original dance works each year. Commanding critical acclaim, ACS recently celebrated its 10th anniversary.

With an eye on the future, and a reverence for its past, NBT looks ahead to its 50th Anniversary and the continuation of presenting outstanding professional ballet and dance productions to the Las Vegas community.

About THEATER ETIQUETTE

- The matinee performance begins promptly at 11 a.m. and lasts approximately 1 hour
- Let your students know in advance what type of conduct is expected of them. This is a LIVE performance. Unlike television and movies, the performers are physically on stage and performing for your enjoyment, any noise may distract them. The performance will be exciting, but let your students know that they will be required to sit quietly in their seats for a reasonably long time
- School clothes are appropriate attire; however, some students may choose to “dress up”
- Please plan to arrive at the theater at least 30 minutes before the performance, as latecomers may not be seated once the performance has begun
- No food, drink, chewing gum, skateboards, cameras, cell phones or recording equipment are allowed inside the theater. If you plan to bring any of these items, please have your students leave them on the bus until after the performance has ended. There will be no provisions for storing these items at the theater
- It is important to have your students visit the restrooms before the performance begins. It is inappropriate to visit the restrooms during a live performance. At all times, an adult must accompany students to the restroom. Ushers will direct you to the restrooms
- We recommend that you provide your students with some guidelines of things to look and listen for during the performance
- **Students should be encouraged to:**
 - Watch the dancers
 - Listen to the music
 - Look at the costumes and lighting designs
 - Laugh when they see the dancers do something funny
 - Clap to show the dancers that they are enjoying the performance when the dancing has finished. It is also customary to applaud again when the dancers take a bow
- **Students should NOT:**
 - Talk or make noise because they might miss something important
 - Chew gum because it is disruptive to others and makes a mess at the theater
 - Leave their seats before the lights go on because this is very disruptive to their neighbors
 - Bring iPods or video games to the theater because this is disruptive to the dancers and other members of the audience
 - Put their feet on the back of the chairs
 - Text or talk on cell phones

About **THE NUTCRACKER**

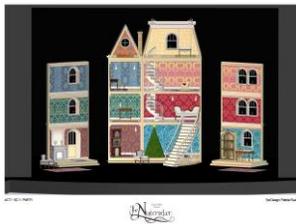
Music: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Choreography: James Canfield

The version of *The Nutcracker* that is performed by Nevada Ballet Theatre is based on E.T.A. Hoffman's story, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, a fairy tale originally intended for adults. The great ballet choreographer and teacher, Marius Petipa, first staged this ballet. Peter Tchaikovsky, a well-respected composer of the time, was invited to create the musical score. This collaboration had already produced *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Petipa gave very detailed instructions of the kind of music he wanted to convey certain actions and moods in the story. In 1891, Tchaikovsky set to work on composing the score. As Petipa began to work on the choreography he became ill, and his assistant Lev Ivanov took over and completed the ballet. When the Russian Imperial Ballet premiered *The Nutcracker* at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg on December 17, 1892, it was far from a success.

Audiences criticized nearly everything from the choreography to the dancers to the music, and the ballet was dropped from the repertoire after two seasons. All that remains of the original choreography is the grand pas de deux between the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier.

In 1944, William Christensen's San Francisco Ballet became the first American company to present a full-length production of *The Nutcracker* in the United States. Since Christensen had never seen the entire ballet performed, in completing choreography, he relied on the recollections of two dancers, Alexandra Danilova and George Balanchine. Balanchine, who grew up in Russia, danced the role of the Prince in *The Nutcracker* in 1919 when he was just 15 years old. The community's reaction to *The Nutcracker* was entirely more enthusiastic than its original audience was. Later when Balanchine moved to the east coast, he founded New York City Ballet and choreographed his own version of *The Nutcracker* for his company and the ballet became a holiday tradition put on by hundreds of professional companies and thousands of dance schools each year.



This is Nevada Ballet Theatre's 32nd year of performing a full-length *Nutcracker* in Las Vegas. Drawing from the original tale of *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, Canfield used the famous ETA Hoffman story as his point of departure for this production. With the theme of time as a continual thread throughout this Victorian-inspired version, a wondrous world of exaggerated perspective will transport audiences – allowing them to view each performance

through the eyes of a child. From extraordinary and ornamental figures such as a flying rocking horse, waltzing flowers and a fairy for all seasons, to some of the most beloved and traditional characters including Clara, Drosselmeyer, Mother Ginger and the Sugar Plum Fairy, these fantasized beings will be brought to life within the walls of a stunning life-sized Victorian dollhouse, complete with a 30 foot tall growing Christmas tree -- and doors and grandfather clocks that range over 15 feet tall.

In keeping with tradition, *The Nutcracker* includes many roles for student dancers, allowing them the opportunity to rehearse in the same studio and perform on the same stage with the professional company. This year's cast of over 130 includes over 90 children from the Academy of Nevada Ballet Theatre and NBT's Education and Outreach programs, *Future Dance* and *Dance Discovery*. "This level of exposure and commitment prepares these young people for what lies ahead in their performance careers and therefore is probably the most important aspect of their training," said Artistic Director James Canfield.

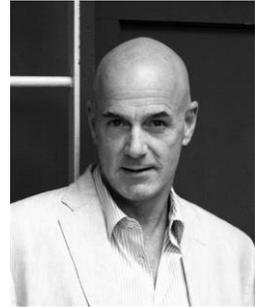


About THE ARTISTS

Choreographer

James Canfield

James Canfield, Founding Artistic Director of Oregon Ballet Theatre and former Artistic Director of Nevada Ballet Theatre in Las Vegas was born in Corning, New York and received his early dance training at the acclaimed Washington School of Ballet under the direction of Mary Day. During his career with The Joffrey Ballet and Washington Ballet, Mr. Canfield danced an extensive repertoire of works by noted choreographers such as Sir Frederick Ashton, Anthony Tudor, George Balanchine, Gerald Arpino, Robert Joffrey, William Forsythe, John Cranko, Marius Petipa, Jiří Kylián, José Limón, Agnes de Mille, Choo San Goh and Val Caniparoli among others. After leaving The Joffrey Ballet, Mr. Canfield was appointed Oregon Ballet Theatre's (OBT) Founding Artistic Director where he along with Haydee Gutierrez established the School of Oregon Ballet Theatre to provide the best classical ballet training to young students and dancers throughout the Northwest.

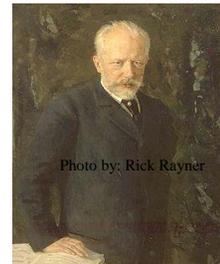


During his time at Nevada Ballet Theatre, he established several new initiatives for the company including *NBT Unveiled*, *4 x 8*, *The Studio Series* and *Dance for Life: Palm Springs*. Many of Mr. Canfield's ballets have joined the repertoire including *Jungle*, *Coco*, *Degas Impressions*, *Cinq Gnessiennes*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Giselle*, *Coppélia*, *Up*, *Equinoxe*, *Neon Glass pas de deux* as well as *Cyclical Night* and *Still*, his first two original works for the company. In December 2012, Mr. Canfield choreographed and premiered an all-new production of *The Nutcracker* for NBT, complete with new sets, costumes and full orchestra.

Composer

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

In 1892 when Tchaikovsky composed his third and last ballet, *The Nutcracker*, he was already famous. He had finished six symphonies, piano and violin concertos, *The 1812 Overture*, tone poems, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Francesca da Rimini*. Only the *Pathétique* Symphony remained to be written. Two of his operas, *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades* had been huge public successes. And, his first two ballets, *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*, captivated audiences in Moscow and St. Petersburg.



Between conducting engagements in Europe, Tchaikovsky worked on *The Nutcracker* as well as the opera, *Yolanta*. By March of 1892, he had finished the orchestration and presented some of the music at a concert in St. Petersburg. This was the first performance of *The Nutcracker Suite*, destined to become one of the most popular symphonic compositions in the musical world.

The ballet, first choreographed by Lev Ivanov, received no more than a polite reception at the premiere. Tchaikovsky had been pessimistic about the ballet from the beginning and had written to his nephew about his concerns. The lukewarm response merely enforced his conviction that he was losing his creative powers. Tchaikovsky produced two acts and three scenes of varied, brilliantly orchestrated musical vignettes. In its overture and fifteen musical parts, are sumptuous waltzes, a French nursery tune, snatches of Schubert and Schumann piano music, an older Georgian cradle song used in the Arabian Dance, a Spanish bolero, an Italian tarantella and a Cossack trepak to show off leaping Russian male dancers.

Costume Designer

Sandra Woodall

Sandra Woodall has contributed scenic and costume designs to San Francisco Ballet, Frankfurt Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet, the Bolshoi Ballet, the Norwegian National Ballet, the State Opera Ballet of Austria, Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Houston Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Project, Singapore Dance Theatre and many other companies around the world.



Ms. Woodall has also recently completed scenic designs for the 100th celebration of Taiwan National Day, scenic and costume designs for *Incantations*, choreographed by Val Caniparoli for the Joffrey Ballet, costume designs for *Francesca da Rimini*, choreographed by Yuri Possokhov for San Francisco Ballet and for *Scorched!*, directed by Carey Perloff at American Conservatory Theater. Other recent designs include scenic and costume designs for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, choreographed by Jorma Elo for the Austria State Opera Ballet, costume designs for *Bells*, choreographed by Yuri Possokhov at the Joffrey Ballet, and scenic and costume designs for *Still Life*, choreographed by Val Caniparoli, for the Scottish Ballet. Other notable projects include scenic and costume designs for *Don Quixote* and for *Sleeping Beauty* for the Norwegian National Ballet, scenic and costume designs for *Ibsen's Women* and for *Lambarena*, both choreographed by Val Caniparoli for San Francisco Ballet, costume designs for *Cinderella* at the Bolshoi Ballet, scenic and costume designs for Yuri Possokov's *Classical Symphony* and Helgi Tomasson's *On Common Ground* at San Francisco Ballet, and *Jaidi* and *Oh, Inverted World!*, choreographed by Trey McIntyre. Among her numerous productions designed for San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre and Magic Theatre are *The Doll's House*, *St. Joan*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, and Joseph Chaikin's revival of *Tongues/Savage Love*. In 1991, Ms Woodall designed costumes for the Eureka Theater's world premiere of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*.

Ms. Woodall's artwork and designs have been shown in solo exhibitions at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut and the San Francisco Museum of Performance and Design, and in numerous group exhibitions, including the 2011 *Wearable Art* exhibit in Hong Kong. In 1999 and 2000, she was a Fulbright scholar teaching at what is now the Taiwan National University of the Arts (TNUA); she has contributed designs and visual consultation to many productions in Taiwan, including 2009's stadium-scale opening pageant for the *Deaf Olympics*.

Set Designer

Patricia Ruel

Patricia Ruel graduated in Set Design from Collège Lionel-Groulx in 1998. She has since then worked on countless theatre productions, television shows, awards ceremonies, festivals and special events as a props designer and set designer, both in Québec and abroad.



Patricia has received two Théâtre Denise-Pelletier prizes, for her sets for *Révizor* directed by Reynald Robinson in 2003 and *Edmond Dantes* directed by Robert Bellefeuille in 2004.

That same year, she created the props for the Cirque du Soleil show *KÀ* in Las Vegas, directed by Robert Lepage, with whom she subsequently worked on the operas *1984*, presented in London in 2005, and *The Rake's Progress*, produced in Brussels in 2007.

Patricia continues her collaboration with Cirque du Soleil under Dominic Champagne's direction in *The Beatles LOVE* for which she designed the props. *Wintuk* (set and props, R. Blackburn and F. Rainville, 2007), *Viva Elvis!* (props, V. Paterson, 2009), *Banana Shpeel* (set and props, D. Shiner, 2010) and *Amaluna* (props, D. Paulus, 2012), followed. She also designed the props for *Reflections in Blue*, a show presented as part of the opening ceremonies of the FINA World Aquatic Championships in 2005, and for the 2007 XLI Super Bowl pre-game show.

Over the last ten years, in Montreal, she has designed props and sets for nearly fifty theatrical productions with many reknown directors such as Fernand Rainville, Serge Postigo, Frédéric Blanchette and Maxime Denommé. Other achievements include many productions for Just for Laughs.

For television, among others, she worked as artistic director for the canadian production of *Dragon's Den*, and for the two latest end-of-the-year specials, *Bye Bye 2010* and *Bye Bye 2011*, aired on SRC for which she received two Gémeau awards in the "Best Set Design: all variety categories, magazines, public affairs, sports" category.

Patricia is now working on The Nevada Ballet Theatre's production of *The Nutcracker* and on the up-coming movie *Émilie* by Guillaume Lonergan.

Lighting Designer

Peter Jakubowki

Peter is currently the Assistant Professor Production/Design specialist for the UNLV Department of Dance. Peter holds a BA in theatre from the State University of New York at Buffalo and an MFA in design from Temple University with an additional concentration in design for dance. He is both a union lighting and scenic designer IATSE USA 829. His work has been awarded the ARTIE award for best lighting design, and he has been nominated five times for the F. Otto Haas award as well as recognized by both the City Paper and the Philadelphia Inquire for excellence in design. His designs include North Shore Music Theatre (Ma), The Prince Music Theatre (Pa), The Walnut Street Theatre (Pa), The Lenape Regional Performing Arts Center (Nj) Maine State Music Theatre (Me). He serves as Resident designer and production manager for The Koresh Dance Company, Jeanne Ruddy Dance, Ballet Fleming and The Snowy Range Dance Festival. He has work in the repertoire of Peter Pucci Plus Dancers, Alban Elved Dance Company, Colorado Ballet to name a few. He is proud to be the resident lighting designer for Nevada Ballet Theatre.



DISCUSSION TOPICS AND ACTIVITY SHEETS

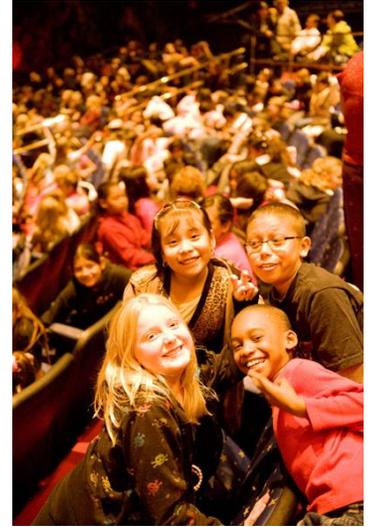
Movement:

Pre-Performance Discussions:

Ask your students how different emotions make them move. Have them get up and show you how you move when you are sad, excited, or upset! Each ballet has different movements to show an emotion. For example *A Soldier* has sharp and strong movements, ask the students what emotion they think that would be.

Post-Performance Discussion:

Ask questions about each scene and how the movements made them feel, and have them act out those emotions. Ask how the movements were different in each scene and how they were the same, do they think the movements were effective at getting across what the choreographers wanted the audience to feel.



Costumes:

Pre-Performance Discussion:

Costumes help the audience to feel the emotions and characteristics of each ballet. Based on what the students know about the ballet now what do they think the costumes will look like?

Post-Performance Discussion:

Did the costumes help your students feel the mood of the ballet? Do your students think the costumes are the right design? If not have them draw what they think the dancers should have worn and why their design would help the audience to better understand the ballet. Have the students tell you what colors they would use and what fabrics or materials.

Music:

Pre-Performance Discussion:

Talk with your students about how music is the only thing that you hear during a ballet. Ballets are not like the movies, and plays, the dancers do not speak. They show their emotion through movement and pantomime. If you have access to the music you can even play parts of it to the students. Also play different types of music like classical or even hip-hop and ask them how it makes them feel and then have them act out that emotion with the music!

Post-Performance Discussion:

Did your students like the music, what was their favorite part? Do they think it helped to show the emotions that the choreographer wanted the audience to feel? Ask your students if they have ever heard *The Nutcracker* music before, if so where and what parts.

Set:

Pre-Performance Discussion:

In the first scene we are inside a life-size Victorian dollhouse, tell your students to pay attention to the lighting, props and scenery that make up the family's home. In the second scene have your students look at how the Victorian dollhouse is transformed into The Battle Scene and then The Snow Scene!

Post-Performance Discussion:

Have your students tell you the difference in each set and how it made them feel. Did they like the lighting and the scenery? How would they design the lighting and the sets? What colors would they use for lighting? Do they think the set helped to show the emotions of the ballet to the audience?

More Post-Performance Questions:

If your students were the choreographers, how would they create the ballet? Have them go through every aspect of creating a ballet; would they keep some things the same?

Overall did they enjoy the ballet, what were their favorite parts?



WORDSEARCH

Test your word-search skills by finding the 10 ballet words

Nutcracker Drosselmeyer emotions choreographed music
Mother Ginger composed Ballet costumes dance

Q	M	J	E	M	O	T	I	O	N	S	U	B	H	W
A	M	I	R	U	M	O	T	V	D	E	G	A	S	M
C	O	M	P	O	S	E	D	P	H	M	E	L	N	O
Z	J	U	E	I	N	L	A	R	J	U	N	G	R	T
W	U	S	W	O	B	K	N	O	C	T	T	W	E	H
S	N	I	Q	P	V	K	C	L	R	S	A	E	Y	E
X	H	C	W	A	C	M	E	E	R	O	S	R	E	R
B	Y	K	S	S	X	I	K	E	E	C	D	T	M	G
C	A	I	X	D	Z	C	C	W	S	C	F	Y	L	I
D	T	L	Q	F	A	K	H	R	E	A	G	G	E	N
E	T	L	L	R	L	J	I	T	R	N	H	Y	S	G
R	G	O	C	E	K	U	N	E	D	N	J	O	S	E
F	B	T	A	G	T	N	E	D	X	M	K	L	O	R
V	U	P	Z	H	J	H	G	A	A	A	L	L	R	K
N	C	H	O	R	E	O	G	R	A	P	H	E	D	Y

ANSWER KEY

WORDSEARCH

Q	M	J	E	M	O	T	I	O	N	S	U	B	H	W
A	M	I	R	U	M	O	T	V	D	E	G	A	S	M
C	O	M	P	O	S	E	D	P	H	M	E	L	N	O
Z	J	U	E	I	N	L	A	R	J	U	N	G	R	T
W	U	S	W	O	B	K	N	O	C	T	T	W	E	H
S	N	I	Q	P	V	K	C	L	R	S	A	E	Y	E
X	H	C	W	A	C	M	E	E	R	O	S	R	E	R
B	Y	K	S	S	X	I	K	E	E	C	D	T	M	G
C	A	I	X	D	Z	C	C	W	S	C	F	Y	L	I
D	T	L	Q	F	A	K	H	R	E	A	G	G	E	N
E	T	L	L	R	L	J	I	T	R	N	H	Y	S	G
R	G	O	C	E	K	U	N	E	D	N	J	O	S	E
F	B	T	A	G	T	N	E	D	X	M	K	L	O	R
V	U	P	Z	H	J	H	G	A	A	A	L	L	R	K
N	C	H	O	R	E	O	G	R	A	P	H	E	D	Y

Additional Resources

Resource Credits

- Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Ilyich_Tchaikovsky)

Further Study

- You Tube: “Peter Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker Suite”
- E.T.A Hoffman. *The Nutcracker and The mouse King*. Orchard Books, 2009
- George Balanchine’s *The Nutcracker* [DVD]: Balanchine. Warner Home Video, 1997
- *Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker*, by Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky, Efrem Kurtz and Philharmonia Orchestra of London (Audio CD - 1995)