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Your Hometown Holiday Tradition: BalletMet's *The Nutcracker*

Featuring live music from the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, voice of Sir Roger Moore

COLUMBUS, OH— Journey into the imagination with the beloved holiday tradition of BalletMet Columbus' *The Nutcracker*, **Dec. 12 – 23** at the historic **Ohio Theatre**. In addition to performances by the BalletMet Company dancers and Dance Academy students, the family classic features Tchaikovsky's delightful score performed live by the Columbus Symphony; the Hilliard Davidson Madrigals and the Bexley Women's Chorale singing in select performances, and recorded narration by actor **Sir Roger Moore**.

The Nutcracker, a treasured tradition in Central Ohio for 30 years, has enchanted generations and continues to be a fixture in Columbus' holiday festivities. This season's magical production, conceived by BalletMet Artistic Director Gerard Charles and theater artist Robert Post, premiered in 2004 and features the Company's 28 professional dancers, 135 Dance Academy student dancers and six young gymnasts from Buckeye Gymnastics. The Company will present 14 public performances and Morning at the Ballet shows exclusively for school groups. After tours earlier this season to New York City and St. Louis, BalletMet will perform *The Nutcracker* in Buffalo, New York, for its third consecutive engagement, accompanied by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and featuring local children.

Three student dancers from the Dance Academy will share the role of Young Clara and two students will dance as Fritz, Clara's brother (casts alternate). Sharing the role of Grown Up Clara are Company dancers Jamie Dee, Bethany Manley, Emily Ramirez and Jessica Brown. The Nutcracker Prince will be danced by Jackson Sarver, Lynorris Evans, David Tlaiye and Bryan Jenkins. Dancing as the Sugar Plum Fairy are Adrienne Benz, Christine Mangia, Carrie West and Emily Gotschall. Gotschall danced the roles of both Young and Grown Up Clara in her years as an Academy student and a Company dancer.

One lucky local child won a walk-on role through the *Your Magic Moment* contest. Children ages 8-12 registered at the Nutcracker Open House Nov. 2 and two calls at area Kroger Marketplaces. The grand prizewinner earned the role as well as tickets to the show, a signed Nutcracker, Cameron Mitchell gift cards and a prize from Saks Fifth Avenue.

As another magical addition to this year's production, BalletMet is proud to be a partner of Tiffany & Co. as it celebrates its grand opening in Columbus. On opening night of *The Nutcracker*, the Sugar Plum Fairy will wear a sparkling diamond necklace, courtesy of Tiffany, with her costume, which itself contains 133 flowers, 20 stars, 361 gems and 10 layers of tulle. The exclusive Tiffany necklace will also be worn by a Company dancer during the Stahlbaum Christmas party in Act I on opening night.

"*The Nutcracker* is a very special ballet and a Central Ohio tradition," said Charles, "and I am particularly proud of this version that combines humor, the wonder of childhood and an adult appreciation of fine things."

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dare to be moved.

“Huntington Bank’s continued sponsorship of *The Nutcracker* enables us to support a beloved tradition in Columbus and provide an event for all to enjoy,” said Elfi Di Bella, Huntington's director of community affairs.

GERARD CHARLES

Known for combining humor, classical technique and engaging narrative, BalletMet Artistic Director Gerard Charles has delighted audiences with his BalletMet productions *The Sleeping Beauty* (2000), *Alice in Wonderland* (2005) and *Aladdin* (2008) as well as his previous collaborations with Robert Post: *Coppélia* (2001) and *Cinderella* (2002). A native of Folkestone, England, Charles trained at London’s Royal Ballet School and danced professionally for BalletMet, Milwaukee Ballet and London’s Ballet International. Charles was named BalletMet’s Artistic Director in 2001 after three seasons as Associate Artistic Director and five years as Ballet Master.

ROBERT POST

Robert Post, born and raised in Columbus, has earned national renown with his one-man shows that showcase his acute sense of the absurd and unparalleled skills of physical comedy. He performed a two-week sold-out run of *The Postman Delivers* to rave reviews at the acclaimed New Victory Theatre and returned last season to New York City for a five week run for the Lincoln Center Institute. *The New York Times* wrote of his “dry humor, expert mime, versatile acting, skilled juggling, ventriloquism, splendid timing and keen sense of satire and the absurd,” noting that he “merits a place on anybody’s all-star team of the goofily gifted.” Post toured his show across the U.S., Russia, Japan, Mexico, Canada, and throughout the Mediterranean, and was honored to perform *POST Comedy Theatre* at the Wexner Center for the Arts in 2008.

SIR ROGER MOORE

Roger Moore, born in Clapham, London, attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and joined the Cambridge Arts Theatre Repertory Company. While he starred on stage and screen, the pinnacle of Moore's career came in 1972 when he was cast in the title role of James Bond. He continued in this series for seven productions. He was appointed a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in 1999. Moore was awarded the Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 1999 and awarded a Knighthood for his charity work in 2003. Moore received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2007.

PERFORMANCES

The Nutcracker performance schedule is as follows:

Friday, December 12, 7:30pm	Friday, December 19, 7:30pm
Saturday, December 13, 2pm & 7:30pm	Saturday, December 20, 2pm & 7:30pm
Sunday, December 14, 1pm* & 5:30pm	Sunday, December 21, 1pm & 5:30pm*
Wednesday, December 17, 7:30pm	Tuesday, December 23, 2pm & 7:30pm
Thursday, December 18, 7:30pm	

*Free audio description is available for the 1pm December 14 and 5:30pm December 21 performances. Reservations are required through BalletMet (614.229.4848).

TICKETS

Tickets to *The Nutcracker* are \$18.50 - \$66 through balletmet.org, CAPA (614.469.0939), and Ticketmaster (614.431.3600, ticketmaster.com). Member-Subscriber tickets are \$24-\$45.50. MetPass member tickets are \$16.50-\$26.50. BalletMet Member-Subscribers and MetPass members should contact the BalletMet Box Office (614.229.4848) or balletmet.org for tickets. College students with ID can purchase \$10 Student Rush tickets at the theater beginning two hours prior to showtime. Students age 13 to 18 can purchase \$5 High Five vouchers at any Kroger Ticketmaster location (quantities are limited). Group discounts available through BalletMet (614.229.4848). **Discount coupons** are available at all Central Ohio Kroger stores and on specially marked Sierra Mist products.

SPECIAL EXTRAS AT THE THEATER

Fun events for families make *The Nutcracker* an even more engaging experience.

- Meet *The Nutcracker* characters after the Dec. 17 and 18 evening performances. Get an autograph or just say hello to select cast members.
- Have a photo taken with *The Nutcracker* characters at each matinee before the show or during intermission for only \$10.
- Listen to the story of *The Nutcracker* read by favorite local celebrities 30 minutes prior to the Dec. 13, 14, 20 and 21 matinee performances. Visit www.balletmet.org for a complete list of celebrity readers.
- *Mix Night at the Nutcracker*: Listen to Mix 97.1 or visit mix971.net for discounts on tickets to the 7:30pm Dec. 17 performance. Sponsored by Mix 97.1.
- *Salute to Seniors*: The 2pm Dec. 23 performance is a special **Salute to Seniors**. Guests ages 55 and up can purchase the best available floor seats for just \$26 through the BalletMet Box Office, 614.229.4848. Sponsored by WMNI.

FIREFIGHTERS 4 KIDS TOY DRIVE | Now – Dec. 5

322 Mt. Vernon Ave. and 1141 N. Hamilton Road

BalletMet is an official Firefighters 4 Kids drop-off site. Donate a toy at the downtown Dance Centre or the Academy satellite in Gahanna and receive a gift in return while supplies last.

BARNES & NOBLE HOLIDAY BOOKFAIR | Dec. 1 - 5 | 1739 Olentangy River Road

A percentage of your purchase price will benefit BalletMet's artistic and educational endeavors. Vouchers must be presented at time of purchase and are available on BalletMet's website.

NUTCRACKER MASCOT SEARCH

Children can catch the Nutcracker mascot around town this holiday season. For the complete schedule of appearances, visit www.balletmet.org

NUTCRACKER DOWNLOADS

Visit balletmet.org and download BalletMet's *The Nutcracker* screen saver and souvenir book with fun activities, recipes and behind-the-scenes information for the whole family.

SPONSOR SUPPORT

Sponsor of *The Nutcracker* is Huntington Bank. Promotional sponsors of *The Nutcracker* are Sierra Mist and Kroger. Media partner is Mix 97.1. Salute to Seniors performance sponsor is WMNI. Your Magic Moment is sponsored by Mix 97.1, *ThisWeek Community Newspapers*, *Columbus Parent*, *The Columbus Dispatch*, Kroger and Saks Fifth Avenue. BalletMet Columbus receives support for its annual performance season from The Columbus Foundation, the Greater Columbus Arts Council, the Ohio Arts Council, Classical 89.7 WOSU-FM, NBC 4, Time Warner Cable and Pepsi. Season partner is The Ohio State University Sports Medicine Center.

BalletMet Columbus, renowned for its versatility and innovative repertory, ranks among the nation's 15 largest dance companies, and its Dance Academy ranks among the five largest professional dance-training centers. Since its inception in 1978, BalletMet has added 142 company premieres to its repertoire and produced 117 world premieres. It has also developed DanceReach, a series of educational and outreach programs that serve 30,000 people annually, as well as a scholarship program that provides tuition for youth based on financial need or talent.

www.balletmet.org

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