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Contact: Jennifer Sciantarelli
Communications Manager
614.586.8661
jsciantarelli@balletmet.org

Share the Holiday Spirit: BalletMet's *The Nutcracker*

Rediscover the magic and joy of the season with an adventure of the imagination

COLUMBUS, OH—Whether continuing a holiday tradition or seeing it for the first time, families and friends will share memories to treasure forever with **BalletMet Columbus' *The Nutcracker*, Dec. 11-23, 2009 at the Ohio Theatre.** The production is an extra special experience for both the young and the young at heart with more than 100 professional Company and student dancers; larger-than-life characters; choreography that combines whimsy and magic with the grace of classical ballet; spectacular sets and costumes; the unforgettable music of Tchaikovsky, and narration by Sir Roger Moore. Highlights of this grand production include a tree that grows 16 feet, five pounds of 'snow' falling during Act I's *Waltz of the Snowflakes*, and more than 130 intricate costumes with about 250 yards of tulle and thousands of buttons, jewels and baubles.

BalletMet's *The Nutcracker* has enchanted generations in Central Ohio for more than 30 years and continues to be a centerpiece in Columbus' holiday festivities. This season's magical production, conceived by BalletMet Artistic Director Gerard Charles and theater artist Robert Post, features BalletMet's 25 professional Company dancers, four trainees and 148 Dance Academy student dancers. The Company will present 14 public performances and three Morning at the Ballet shows for school groups. BalletMet will also tour the production to Syracuse, New York, for its first engagement with the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra.

Charles believes audiences find something new in each viewing of *The Nutcracker*, and at the same time they appreciate the sense of familiarity that comes with the annual event.

"*The Nutcracker* reminds us of treasured times with our family, of a shared adventure or a special moment," Charles said, "My aim with BalletMet's production is to keep *The Nutcracker* an entertaining and special event that is both fresh and rekindles a warm nostalgia."

"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.

In keeping with the spirit of helping others, *Nutcracker* patrons can bring a jar of peanut butter or other food donation to the theater to benefit the Mid-Ohio Food Bank through *Feed the Nutcracker, Feed Columbus*, presented by BalletMet with support from Kroger. Participants will receive a gift in exchange for their donation.

—More—

dare to be moved.

Gerard Charles, *Choreography, Creation and Conception*

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, *Creation and Conception*

Columbus native Robert Post 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 *The Postman Delivers* to rave reviews at the New Victory Theatre and returned to New York for an engagement 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 performed *POST Comedy Theatre* at the Wexner Center for the Arts in 2008.

Sir Roger Moore, *Narration*

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. He received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2007.

PERFORMANCES AND TICKETS

The Nutcracker performance schedule is as follows:

Friday, December 11, 7:30pm	Saturday, December 19, 2pm & 7:30pm
Saturday, December 12, 2pm & 7:30pm	Sunday, December 20, 1pm & 5:30pm
Sunday, December 13, 2pm*	Tuesday, December 22, 2pm & 7:30pm
Thursday, December 17, 7:30pm	Wednesday, December 23, 2pm & 7:30pm
Friday, December 18, 7:30pm	

*Free audio description available for the 2pm Dec. 13 performance. Reservations required: 614.229.4848.

Tickets start at \$29 and can be purchased through CAPA (614.469.0939), Ticketmaster (800.982.2787, ticketmaster.com) or balletmet.org. Discount coupons are available at all Central Ohio Kroger stores. Group discounts available through BalletMet (614.586.8665). College students with ID can purchase \$15 Student Rush tickets at the theater beginning two hours prior to show time. Students age 13 to 18 can purchase \$5 High Five vouchers at any Central Ohio Kroger Ticketmaster location.

SPECIAL EXTRAS

Fun events at the theater make *The Nutcracker* an even more engaging experience:

- Have a photo taken with *Nutcracker* characters at matinees prior to or at intermission for \$10.
- The *Nutcracker* will welcome audience members to the theater before every performance.
- The 7:30pm Dec. 22 performance is a **Salute to Seniors**. Patrons age 55 and up can purchase the best available floor seats for \$26 at 614.229.4848.

Feed the Nutcracker, Feed Columbus: Choreographing a Hunger-Free Community

Now-Dec. 23, with support from Kroger. All donations made through the food drive benefit the Mid-Ohio Food Bank. Families can 'feed' a peanut butter donation to the *Nutcracker* at the BalletMet Dance Centre; at *Nutcracker* performances, and at any *Nutcracker* community appearance. Participants will receive a gift or ticket discount in exchange for their donation.

Nutcracker Appearances

The *Nutcracker* mascot will make appearances throughout Central Ohio this holiday season. For the complete schedule, visit www.balletmet.org.

Nutcracker Downloads

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

SPONSOR SUPPORT: *The Nutcracker* production sponsor is Huntington Bank. Promotional partner is Kroger. Media partners are *Capital Style*, WBNS 10TV, *The Columbus Dispatch* and Sunny 95. Salute to Seniors sponsor is WMNI. BalletMet Columbus receives support for its annual performance season from The Columbus Foundation, the Greater Columbus Arts Council, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Ohio Arts Council, Classical 89.7 WOSU-FM, Time Warner Cable. Season partner is The Ohio State University Sports Medicine Center.

ABOUT BALLETMET COLUMBUS: BalletMet Columbus, renowned for its versatility and innovative repertory, ranks among the nation's largest dance companies, and its Dance Academy ranks among the largest professional dance-training centers. Since its inception in 1978, BalletMet has added 152 Company premieres to its repertoire and produced 124 world premieres. It has also developed DanceReach, a series of educational and outreach programs that serve 20,000 people annually; through DanceReach, up to 70 scholarships each year give access to talented youth, many from minority and underserved groups, who cannot otherwise participate.

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