

DANCE



Arabian scene from *The Nutcracker*.

Eugene Ballet Presents The Nutcracker

The Eugene Ballet Company will once again present the traditional holiday ballet, *The Nutcracker*, beginning Friday, Dec. 14, and continuing for eight performances. The Eugene Symphony Orchestra will perform with guest Chilean conductor William McDermott. New costumes are by acclaimed designer David Heuvel of Ballet West.

Special guest star Virginia Johnson will dance the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Ms. Johnson is the leading ballerina of the Dance Theater of Harlem, and has performed at the White House, Lincoln Center, the Royal Opera House in London, and throughout the world.

Jim Sohm of the San Francisco Ballet joins the cast in the role of the Nutcracker Prince. And Elizabeth Nesi, who played Juliet in Eugene Ballet's recent production of *Romeo and Juliet*, returns to dance the Snow Pas de Deux in this production.

The Nutcracker tells the story of a little girl, Clara, who receives

a Nutcracker doll from her uncle, Herr Drosselmeyer, at a family Christmas gathering. The doll is broken during a scuffle with her brother, Fritz. Herr Drosselmeyer then weaves a magical dream of fantasy for Clara. The doll is transformed into a handsome prince who, after defeating an army of mice, carries Clara into the magical Kingdom of Sweets, where she is entertained by dances from around the world. After Clara's adventures in the Kingdom of Sweets, our heroine is returned home to awaken and wonder, "Was it really a dream?"

This is the first year that the Eugene Ballet Company has taken *The Nutcracker* on regional tour to cities in Oregon, California, Idaho and Washington. The tour began Nov. 23, and has two performances remaining. Besides sets and costumes, the touring company brings their own sound, lights and a portable dance floor to each performance. Children from each community were auditioned to dance the children's roles in each performance.

Five evening performances are scheduled at 8 pm on Dec. 14, 15, 16, 21 and 22, in the Hult Center's Silva Concert Hall. Three matinees at 2:30 pm will be presented Dec. 15, 16 and 22. Call 687-5000 for ticket information.

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