

THE NUTCRACKER

The Little Ballet Theatre's 42nd annual production of Tchaikovsky's holiday ballet leaps to life

Story by **REBECCA SEDLAK**

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Rehearsals started Oct. 1, and area dancers from age 7 on up have been practicing for two months before the big weekend: three back-to-back

performances of "The Nutcracker" at Astoria High School's auditorium on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 3 and 4.

"I love when it all comes together and you get to see them do it in their costumes for the first time. It just takes up a whole notch," says Maddox Dance Studio teacher

Emily Gilbertson Madsen. "Once they get their costumes it makes it come to life."

Madsen, a Seaside High School grad who danced Clara herself way back when, is in her 12th year of choreographing scenes in the Little Ballet Theatre's annual holiday production, including coaching this year's

Clara, danced by Anita Barbic.

"I love bringing the Clara out of girls. I know what it means to put yourself in Clara's shoes," Madsen says. "It's fun to come up with new choreography for each individual Clara. There are dancers that have stronger skills — someone has these legs that go



KING MOUSE

Patience Womack, senior at Astoria High School

Other parts: Dance of the Snowflakes, Arabian Coffee, Waltz of the Flowers

I'd say that King Mouse is my favorite. It's a part I've always wanted since I was younger. A couple of the girls who played the King Mouse when I was younger were girls I looked up to when I was little. I was a baby mouse twice and a big mouse four times, and now it's my senior year so it's kind of like I'm top of the mice now. The dancing in it is fun because it's a lot of leaps, which is what I like to do.



THE SNOW PRINCESS

Maia Mahoney, junior at Astoria High School

Other parts: Puppet, Princess of the Kingdom, Russian Nougat, Waltz of the Flowers

It's fun being in a tutu — I know everybody says that, but it's true. And having a solo is fun: It's just you and you get to, like, express in your own way. Snow Princess is my favorite part. The dancing is a lot of stuff that I've done already, so picking it up was easy.



ARABIAN VISION

Andrea Harris, sophomore, Astoria High School

Other parts: Puppet, Snow Angel, Dance of the Snowflakes, Dream Fairy, Russian Nougat, Waltz of the Flowers

My favorite part is probably Arabian Vision or being a Snowflake. I love Arabian Vision because I've always taken tumbling classes, so it's something that I'm like good at and that I enjoy doing. And with the Dance of the Snowflakes, it's just all of us together, so it really looks like a big production that's really beautiful.