

# The Oregon Ballet Theatre prepares us for Christmas

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Oregon Ballet Theatre's (OBT) lavish Imperial Russian production of The Nutcracker returns to the Portland Civic Auditorium stage for 23 performances, December 8-26, 1999. The Nutcracker is brought to life by composer Peter Ilyric Tchaikovsky's enchanting musical score; OBT Artistic Director James Canfield, and sumptuous sets and costumes bring Nutcracker to life by composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's enchanting musical score, mesmerizing choreography by internationally renowned designer Campbell Baird. The performance is accompanied by the Oregon Ballet Theatre Orchestra, conducted by Niel DePonte, and features a live children's choir.

The Nutcracker will perform December 8-11, 14-18 and 21-23, 1999 at 7:30 p.m.; December 11, 18 and 22-24, 1999 at 2:00 p.m.; and at new early Sunday performances times of 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on December 12, 19 and 26, 1999.

Tickets, ranging in price from \$5.50 to \$87.00, can be purchased now by calling 503-2-BALLET (503-222-5538), toll free at 1-888-922-5538, or Ticketmaster at 503-790-2787.

Key Bank presents Oregon Ballet Theatre's performances of The Nutcracker, with additional sponsorship provided by Starbucks.

A Northwest holiday tradition since its premiere in 1993, OBT's production has captivated more than 350,000 children of all ages. The Company's unique rendition of The Nutcracker spins a wonderful tale of a young girl, Marie, and her amazing dream adventure, set amidst the splendor of Imperial Russia.

Most of the elaborate costumes, evoking the richness of Imperial Russia, were constructed by the same design shop in New York that produced the costumes for The Phantom of the Opera, Les Miserables, and Cats. Over 150 storybook characters, the spellbinding on-stage snow fall, a Christmas tree that grows to 65 feet tall, and pyrotechnic special effects, combine to make The nutcracker a visual treat.

Nearly 90 children from across the Portland/Metropolitan area will perform alongside Oregon Ballet Theatre's professional company in the roles of party boys and girls, soldiers, rats, cavalry horsemen, Arabian attendants, pastry chefs assistants, and Russian candies, among others.

Act one of The Nutcracker is set in winter at a Russian country estate where villagers from the surrounding countryside have gathered from a festival holiday party.

Monsieur Faberge, a guest at the party mesmerizes the children with playful mechanical dolls that spring to life, and presents the young heroine Marie with the gift of a toy Nutcracker. After the guests have



JOE WILHELM

left and family has gone off to bed, Marie steals back down to the parlour to retrieve her Nutcracker. Suddenly the room is filled with large rats and toy soldiers, led by a life-sized Nutcracker himself.

A fantastical battle ensues, and with Marie's help, the soldier defeat the rats, and the

Nutcracker magically transforms into a handsome prince.

In Act Two, the audience accompanies Marie and the Nutcracker Prince on an adventurous sleigh ride through a shimmering land of

(Please see story next page)

## OBT hosts "A Nutcracker Tea" - Dec. 5

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In conjunction with Oregon Ballet Theatre's (OBT) Imperial Russian production of the beloved Holiday classic The Nutcracker, The School of Oregon Ballet Theatre will host "A Nutcracker Tea," Sunday, December 5, from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm, at The Portland Marriott Hotel (1401 SW Front Avenue, downtown Portland). Proceeds benefit The school Oregon Ballet Theatre Scholarship Fund.

This magical afternoon of family fun will include tea, treats, holiday carolers, and enchanting storytelling of OBT's unique Imperial Russian version of The Nutcracker, with students from the School of Oregon Ballet Theatre costumed as characters from

the production. Tickets for "A Nutcracker Tea" are \$20

per person. For more information or an invitation, call The School of Oregon Ballet Theatre at (501) 227-6890.

The School of Oregon Ballet Theatre, under the direction of Haydee Gutierrez, offers professional instruction in classical ballet for children and adults. The School boasts an enrollment of nearly 300 students, with over 200 children auditioning annually. Students have the opportunity to perform with the professional Company in select performances and in the School's Annual Performance each spring, as well as study with internationally renowned guest instructors. For the 1999/2000 season, two School of OBT trained students are Company members, six apprentices.



## Thanksgiving Turkey Give-away

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