

THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE  
PRESENTS

# NUTCRACKER

by Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet



STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS  
an NAC Dance presentation

2025-2026 SEASON  
Caroline Ohrt, Executive Producer, Dance

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# Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet

## NUTCRACKER

NAC Dance ~ School Matinee

**Date:** Wednesday, December 3, 2025

**Duration:** 12:00p.m. to 2:00p.m.  
Including a 20-minute intermission

**Location:** Southam Hall, National Arts Centre

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE STUDENT MATINEE IS A DRESS REHEARSAL, WHICH MAY INVOLVE STOPS AND STARTS DURING THE PERFORMANCE.

### CREDITS

**Choreography:** Galina Yordanova and Nina Menon

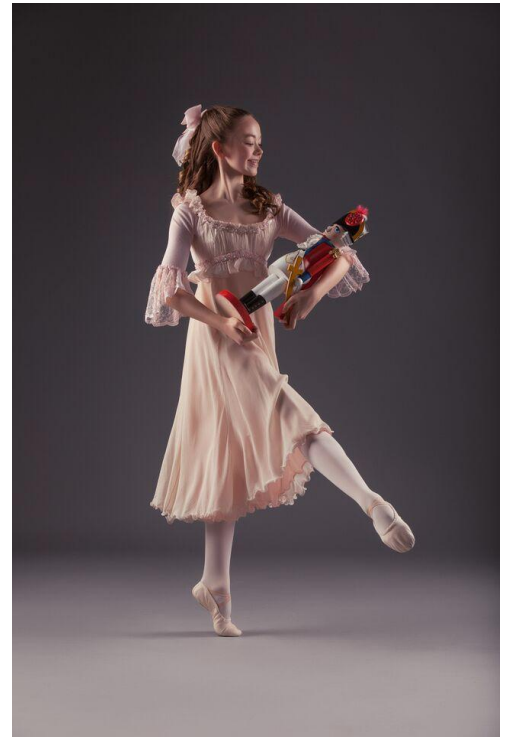
**Music:** Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

**Costume Design:** Paul Daigle

**Scenic Design:** Brian Perchaluk

**Lighting Design:** Michael J. Whitfield

**Conductor:** Earl Stafford



***“... has enough variety of pace, texture and style to offer rewards both for first-time ballet-goers and seasoned dance fans.”*** - Michael Crabb, The National Post, December 6, 1999

***“The story speaks to the child in everyone—the child who believes in fantasy and the spirit of Christmas.”*** – André Lewis, Artistic Director

Based on E.T.A. Hoffmann's classic tale, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's *Nutcracker* tells the story of a young girl's Christmas fantasy. This classic version is set to Tchaikovsky's glorious music, with its wonderfully danceable, innocent melodies and brilliantly inventive orchestration. It features dancing mice, a sugar plum fairy, children on stage and a Christmas tree that grows all wrapped up in a turn-of-the-century Canadian setting. With original costumes and scenery by designers Paul Daigle and Brian Perchaluk, this new *Nutcracker* is visually spectacular. Choreographed by Galina Yordanova and Nina Menon, the RWB's *Nutcracker* preserves the best of the Russian tradition and spices it with a uniquely Canadian perspective. An instant holiday classic!

# THEATRE ETIQUETTE

For your students to have the best experience possible, we have prepared a small outline of what is expected of them as audience members. As a teacher bringing your students to a performance at the NAC, please keep in mind that you are responsible for the behaviour of your students.

Being an audience member is as essential to the ballet performance as the dancers themselves. What helps to make a show a success is in part how the audience reacts to it, whether through applause, laughter or surprise. Discuss proper audience etiquette with students before the performance. Arrive approximately half an hour before show time to get settled in to enjoy the show.

## AUDIENCE ROLE ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

### Students should be encouraged to:

- ✓ Freely react to the performance within reason (please no yelling). Dancers love to hear applause for something done well, or something you enjoyed seeing. There is no right or wrong time to show your appreciation for what you see on stage.
- ✓ Clap at the end of a dance (when there is a pause in the music) if you feel like showing appreciation.
- ✓ Watch in a quiet concentrated way. This supports the dancers so they can do their best work on stage.
- ✓ Enjoy the music and look at the sets and costumes.
- ✓ Consider that constructive criticism is always appreciated more than purely negative criticism.
- ✓ Remember to turn off cell phones and that no recording devices are allowed.

### Students should not:

- x Move about in the seats or get up to leave during a performance (except in an emergency situation).
- x Eat, drink, speak aloud, or otherwise cause a disturbance to those around you (these things are not only a distraction to other audience members, but also to the performers on stage, which can be dangerous for them.)

## THE STORY OF THE NUTCRACKER

Setting: Christmas, 1913 in a large Canadian home. It's a prosperous time in a prosperous city whose population has swollen with new arrivals. The First World War is still half a year away.

### Overture

'Tis the night before Christmas and all through Clara's house, everything and everyone is stirring -- even the mice! The people inside are getting ready for the big Christmas party -- cooking and wrapping and dressing and fussing. Outside, neighbourhood boys play hockey on the street while friends and family start to arrive, carrying armloads of presents and anticipating a marvelous event.



### ACT I - Scene I - Clara's Bedroom

Twelve-year old Clara is oblivious to all the noise and confusion. She's dreaming in front of the mirror in her bedroom, practicing her ballet steps. She wants to be perfect when she dances for her glamorous Aunt Josephine, a singer who has travelled all the way from Montreal on the train.

Mama interrupts. *"Where is the bow that I made for your hair?"* she demands. *"And where is Dieter?"* Clara's younger brother leaps out of a large armoire, brandishing a toy sword. Grandmother Marguerite finds her way to the bedroom and manages to calm everyone down.

Things aren't turning out the way Mama has planned; not even the Christmas tree has been delivered. *"But Mr. Drosselmeier promised to bring a tree!"* She runs off to check on things downstairs while Grandmother shows the children some favourite photographs of Christmas past.

### Scene II - The Christmas Party

Mama, Papa and the butler are looking at the empty space in the big living room where the tree should be. What kind of a Christmas party is this going to be? Among the guests filling the room is Aunt Josephine. Resplendent in furs, she makes a grand entrance with her fiancé, Edouard, dashing in his military uniform.

At last! Mr. Drosselmeier carries in a tree. Clara suddenly feels shy when he introduces her to his Grandnephew, Julien.

In no time at all, the tree is decorated and Clara has the honour of putting the star on the very top. Suddenly, the first-ever electric Christmas lights illuminate the tree!

Mr. Drosselmeier hands out his presents; all enchanting. Dieter's army of toy soldiers has now been augmented by Mounted Police. Mr. Drosselmeier's masterpiece goes to Clara -- a beautifully hand-crafted Nutcracker.

During Christmas dinner, Clara slips away to admire her Nutcracker and imagines that he comes alive to dance with her. The doorbell rings and a bear scurries in, admires the tree and dances happily with the Christmas toys. The party breaks up in a flurry of dancing and silliness and romance. *"Good night everyone! Merry Christmas!"*

### Scene III - Bedtime

Clara falls asleep but is soon awakened by the terrifying Mouse King who is about to steal her beloved Nutcracker. The clock strikes midnight.

### Scene IV - The Living Room

Moonlight shimmers through the window and the room starts to change into something strange and new. Clara finds Mr. Drosselmeier who tries to convince her that she has nothing to fear. Suddenly before her very eyes, the room and the Christmas tree begin to grow. Clara is attacked by scurrying mice while trying to save her Nutcracker. The Nutcracker comes alive and chases the mice away. Dieter's squadron of toy soldiers and Mounted Police are now a living regiment and battle fiercely against the menacing mice with cannons, swords and every ounce of cleverness they can muster. The battle takes a turn for the worse when Fritz is wounded and the Nutcracker is shot by the Mouse King while attempting to help Dieter.

### Scene V - A Magical Forest



Finally, Clara defeats the Mouse King and begs Mr. Drosselmeier to help her wounded Nutcracker. It's only after Clara professes her love for Nutcracker that Mr. Drosselmeier can bring him to life again. The Nutcracker was Julien all along and he is now a handsome prince. They walk hand in hand into a magical pine forest, dancing under a sky filled with stars and the Northern Lights. Snow begins to fall. As the Snow falls, twelve polar bears cubs and one big playfully

wander into the forest. The polar bears are happy to find Clara and the Nutcracker Prince, and bid them farewell as the Nutcracker prince and Clara depart to the Sugar Plum fairy's kingdom.

### ACT II - Scene 1 - The Kingdom

The Nutcracker Prince and Clara travel to the Sugar Plum Fairy's kingdom, where adorable little angels along with Mr. Drosselmeier help with the preparations for their arrival. The Sugar Plum Fairy gives Clara and Prince Julien a very warm welcome and an elaborate ceremony ensues to honour them. Wonderful dances from many different lands and many more delights are performed, reminding Clara of all the people arriving every day to their country.

In a beautiful pas de deux, the prince has the great honour of dancing with Clara. She simply floats in time to the music. In a grand farewell gesture, all the inhabitants of the magical land gather to bid Clara a happy journey home.

### Scene II - Early Morning

When Clara wakes up, she is happy to be in her own bedroom. The Nutcracker stands proudly next to her. Remembering her dream, she's relieved to see her big brother Fritz striding into the room, alive and well, and announcing, *"It's snowing!"*

They bundle up, go outside and watch the snow fluttering down. It was the best Christmas ever!

- Jacqui Good



## ABOUT THE NAC ORCHESTRA

The NAC Orchestra was formed at the creation of Canada's National Arts Centre in 1969 and gives over 100 performances a year with world-renowned artists. It is noted for the passion and clarity of its performances and recordings, its ground-breaking teaching and outreach programs, and nurturing of Canadian creativity.

In 2015, Alexander Shelley began his tenure as NAC Orchestra Music Director, following Pinchas Zukerman's 16 seasons at the helm. In addition to a full series of subscription concerts at the National Arts Centre each season, the Orchestra tours throughout Canada and around the world. The NAC Orchestra has made over 40 commercial recordings, including the ground-breaking *Life Reflected*, which includes *My Name is Amanda Todd* by Jocelyn Morlock, winner of the JUNO Award for Classical Composition of the Year 2018, and Angela Hewitt's 2015 JUNO Award-winning album of Mozart Piano Concertos. Many more concerts are freely available through NACmusicbox.ca on the NAC's performing arts education website ArtsAlive.ca. These include many of the 80+ new works commissioned by the NAC Orchestra since its inception, most from Canadian composers.

The Music Director role is supported by **Elinor Gill Ratcliffe**, C.M., O.N.L., LL.D. (hc).



## ABOUT BALLET

**ballet** – (noun) an artistic dance that usually tells a story or expresses a mood, performed by either a soloist or a group of dancers in a theatre, concert hall, etc.

**balletic** – (adjective) of or having to do with the ballet

**balletomane** – (noun) a person who is enthusiastic about ballet

The word ballet refers to a specific dance technique that has evolved over the last 350 years. Its roots lie in the royal courts of the 16th century. Ballet involves a combination of movement, music and design where emotions and stories are translated through precise body movement and facial expressions.

### A Short History of Ballet

People have always danced. The first dances were part of religious and community ceremonies, but by the time of the Ancient Greeks and Romans, dancing had also become a form of entertainment. In the Middle Ages, the church in Europe claimed that dancing was sinful, but when the Renaissance arrived in the 1400s, dancing had become popular once again. It is in the European courts of the 16th and 17th centuries that the true origins of ballet lie.



Amanda Green  
@ David Cooper

### The First Ballet

In 16th century France and Italy, royalty competed to have the most splendid court. Monarchs would search for and employ the best poets, musicians, and artists. At this time, dancing became increasingly theatrical. This form of entertainment, also called the *ballet de court* (court ballet), featured elaborate scenery and lavish costumes, plus a series of processions, poetic speeches, music and dancing. The first known ballet, *Le Ballet Comique* was performed in 1581 at the wedding of the Queen of France's sister.

### The Sun King

In the 17th century, the popularity and development of ballet can be attributed to King Louis XIV of France. He took dancing very seriously and trained daily with his dance master, Beauchamp. One of his famous roles was the Rising Sun and this led him to become known as the "Sun King." King Louis also set up the Academie Royale de Danse (Royal Academy of Dance) in 1661, where for the first time steps were structurally codified and recorded by Beauchamp. These are the same steps that have been handed down through centuries, and which now form the basis of today's classical ballet style.

### The First Professional Dancers

At first, ballets were performed at the Royal Court, but in 1669 King Louis opened the first opera house in Paris. Ballet was first viewed publicly in the theatre as part of the opera. The first opera featuring ballet, entitled *Pomone*, included dances created by Beauchamp. Women participated in ballets at court, but were not seen in the theatre until 1681. Soon, as the number of performances increased, courtiers who danced for a hobby gave way to professional dancers who trained longer and harder. The physical movement of the first professional dancers was severely hindered by their lavish and weighty costumes and headpieces. They also wore dancing shoes with tiny heels and pointed toes, which made it rather difficult to dance.



### Revealing Feet and Ankles

Early in the 18th century, the ballerina Marie Camargo shocked the audiences by shortening her skirts – to just above the ankle. She did this to be freer in her movements and to allow the audience to see her intricate footwork and complex jumps, which often rivalled those of the men. At this time, female dancers also began to dominate the stage over their male counterparts. Ballet companies were now being set up all over France to train dancers for the opera. The first official ballet company (a collection of dancers who train professionally) was based at the Paris Opera and opened in 1713.



### The Pointe Shoe

By 1830, ballet as a theatrical art truly came into its own.

Influenced by the Romantic Movement, which was sweeping the world of art, music, literature and philosophy, ballet took on a whole new look. The ballerina reigned supreme. Female dancers now wore calf-length, white bell-shaped tulle skirts. To enhance the image of the ballerina as light and elusive, the pointe shoe was introduced, enabling women to dance on the tips of their toes.

### Classical Ballet

Although the term “classical” is often used to refer to traditional ballet, this term really describes a group of story ballets first seen in Russia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At this time, the centre of ballet moved from France to Russia. In Russia, the French choreographer Marius Petipa collaborated with the Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky to create the lavish story ballet spectacles such as *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*. Today, these ballets still form the basis of the classical ballet repertoire of companies all over the world.

### One Act Ballets

In 1909, the Russian impresario Serge Diaghilev brought together a group of dancers, choreographers, composers, artists and designers for his company, the Ballets Russes. This company took Paris by storm, introducing short, one act ballets such as *Schéhérazade*, *Les Sylphides*, *The Rite of Spring*, *Firebird* and *Petrouchka*. Some of the world's greatest dancers, including Anna Pavlova (1881–1931), Vasslav Nijinsky (1889–1950) and choreographers Mikhail Fokine (1880–1942) and George Balanchine (1904–1983) were part of Diaghilev's company.

### Establishing Dance in North America

Almost all contemporary ballet companies and dancers are influenced by Diaghilev's Ballet Russes. The first visit by this company to North America in 1916–1917 stimulated great interest in ballet. Dancers from the Ballets Russes were instrumental in furthering this new interest in ballet. For example, dancer George Balanchine went to the United States and founded the New York City Ballet (originally called the American Ballet). He became renowned for perfecting the abstract ballet and for establishing neo-classicism through his choreographic masterpieces such as *Serenade*, *Agon* and *Concerto Barocco*. Ninette de Valois and Marie Rambert also went on to found, respectively, England's Royal Ballet and the Rambert Dance Company. It is from these roots that two English women, Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farrally, founded the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in 1939, making it the oldest ballet company in Canada.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The first public performance of the Nutcracker was in December 1892.
- The tutu appeared in the 1800s.
- The average tutu takes 60-90 hours of labour and 100 yards of ruffle to create. The same tutu costs up to \$2000!
- A male ballet dancer lifts over 1.5 tons worth of ballerinas during a performance.
- A three-hour ballet performance is roughly equivalent to two 90-minute soccer games back to back, or running 18 miles.
- A prima ballerina can complete 32 fouette turns, while staying in the exact same spot on the floor. After the turns, her pointe shoe tip is HOT to the touch and it is so worn out that it is used then only for rehearsal. On average, ballerinas wear out three pairs of pointe shoes per week. A ballet pointe shoe lasts an average of only eight dancing hours. A single pair of pointe shoes costs approximately \$100, which means each dancer goes through about \$15,000 worth of pointe shoes in a season!

## HISTORY OF CANADA'S ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET

Versatility, technical excellence and a captivating style are the trademarks of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, qualities that have garnered both critical and audience acclaim. These qualities keep the RWB in demand as it presents more than 100 performances every season.

Founded in 1939 by Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farrally, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet holds the double distinction of being Canada's premier ballet company and the longest continuously operating ballet company in North America. In 1953, the Company received its royal title, the first granted under the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

In 1958, Arnold Spohr was appointed artistic director. Under his direction the Royal Winnipeg Ballet grew and developed to take its place among the world's internationally renowned companies. To further the Company's development, a professional school was created in 1970 under the direction of David Moroni. Today, two-thirds of the Company's dancers are graduates of the school.

On March 7, 1996, André Lewis was named artistic director of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet and has been with the RWB ever since. During his tenure as artistic director, Lewis has worked to revitalize the Company's repertoire, especially with the commissioning of new full-length ballets such as *Dracula*, *Nutcracker* and *The Magic Flute*.

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet began to tour Canada in 1945; it completed its first American tour in 1954. Today, the Company spends 15 or more weeks a year on the road, performing in centres large and small. Throughout its history, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet has been a dance leader, recording innumerable firsts. It developed the concept of the regional ballet festival in the 1940s. It was the first Western company to perform in Cuba after the revolution. It received gold medals at the International Ballet Festival in Paris in 1968 and that same year became the first Canadian company to tour Russia and Czechoslovakia.

The RWB School Professional Division was founded in 1970 by former principal dancer, David Moroni, C.M. Internationally recognized as a centre of excellence in dance training for more than 35 years, the School is a respected training institution for talented young students who aspire to become dance professionals.

In 1986, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet began construction of a new home for the Company and School. This unique facility, which includes 10 dance studios (including a performance studio), physiotherapy room, administrative production offices, box office and wardrobe department, was officially opened in January 1988. For Canada's oldest ballet company, winner of accolades and warm welcomes in 573 cities worldwide, this is home.

## **BALLET TRAINING**

The career of a dancer is relatively short and it is not unusual to spend more years training than dancing professionally. The movements demanded of the human body in ballet are of a very specific nature, requiring great precision and care. As a result, the physique must be prepared for this future at a young age. A student aspiring to be a classical ballet dancer must undergo much preliminary work in order to become accustomed to the demands that will be imposed upon the body when dancing the many hours required of a professional dancer. The professional training period usually consists of at least eight or nine years of intensive, precise work. Ideally, girls and boys should begin their professional training at the age of nine. Training is a very progressive process. The young professional student begins with daily classes, practicing the basic ballet positions and movements, learning body placement, correct carriage, balance and artistry. As the student progresses, time spent in classes each week increases, as does the difficulty and extensiveness of the skills taught.

As well as the daily class in classical technique, students are required to receive instruction in variation (solo) work, pointe (dancing on the toes), pas de deux (a dance for two), character (ethnic), jazz and modern dance.

Prior to the introduction of pointe work, a number of criteria must be considered. These include the amount of previous training, a student's strength and ability, as well as age as it relates to the bone development in the dancer's feet. Pas de deux and repertoire (the collection of different ballets that a dance company performs) are introduced only when the student has adequate strength, ability and training.

Students who graduate to a professional ballet company usually begin dancing as a member of the corps de ballet (ensemble). After a few years, corps de ballet members who demonstrate growth in artistry, technical ability, musicality and ability to communicate with the audience may be promoted to the rank of soloist or second soloist. Finally, the highest achievement in the company, the position of principal dancer or ballerina, is attainable by only a few gifted dancers.

## ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

### *Galina Yordanova, Choreographer*

Madame Yordanova trained for nine years at Baku in the USSR and for five years with the Bolshoi Ballet where she received her Teacher's Diploma in 1960. She held diplomas in Choreography and Teacher Training from the G.I.T.S. in Moscow. In 1960, Madame Yordanova was Ballet Mistress of the Varna Norodna Opera in Bulgaria where she staged a number of classics including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Raymonda*, *Le Corsaire*, *Coppélia*, *Les Sylphides*, *Giselle* and *Nutcracker*. She has also worked extensively with the Ballet der Deutschen Oper, Berlin and with companies in Madrid and Valencia, Spain and in Nagoya and Kyoto, Japan.



Starting in 1980, Madame Yordanova began to spend a portion of each year in Winnipeg, teaching at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School, Professional Division Summer Session. Her expert teaching of the Russian style has been an important component of the development of the teaching style of the School.

In 1995, she joined the artistic faculty full-time as Resident Guest Teacher. She worked extensively with the RWB dancers to prepare them for the Company's 1987 premiere of *Swan Lake*, which she staged in the Russian style. In 1990, Madame Yordanova shared her expertise and talent in the staging of the RWB's premiere of *La Bayadère, Act II*, featuring members of the Company together with young artists from the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. In celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the RWB School in 1996, she staged *Don Quixote*, with the school entire student body performing alongside Company members who were school graduates in the lead roles. For the RWB's 1999/2000 season, Madame Yordanova, along with Nina Menon, choreographed a new version of *Nutcracker* for the Company which premiered in Ottawa at the national Arts Centre on December, 1999.

### *Nina Menon, Choreographer*

Nina joined the Royal Winnipeg Ballet after graduating from The Royal Conservatory of The Hague and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet Professional Division. As a member of the corps de ballet she danced numerous soloist roles and in 1990 she made her choreographic debut at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's choreographic workshop. The success of this ballet and others, plus the commissioning by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet of her popular ballet *La Soif*, led Artistic Director André Lewis to appoint Nina Menon Resident Choreographer.



Highlights of Nina's residency include *Drunken Butterflies* a ballet choreographed to Polish composer Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki. This ballet explores the life of an immigrant family through dance and film. In 1999 Nina collaborated with Galina Yordanova on the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's new version of *Nutcracker* which premiered in Ottawa at the National Arts Centre. In the same season Nina shared with the world her East Indian ancestral roots by creating a ballet to The Gita Govinda. Collaborating with composer Mychael Danna (*Felicia's Journey*, *Mansoon Wedding*, *Vanity Fair*) Ms Menon's ballet, *The Gitagovinda*, told an ancient story from her personal connection with the poem. The sacred poem was passed down to Nina by her grandmother.

During her residency, Nina choreographed several ballets for the Professional Division students and taught dance at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's Recreational Division. Nina now lives in Montreal with life partner Mark Godden and their two sons. She teaches ballet at Sheila Parkins Dance Academy and several Montessori schools. In her spare time she loves to garden.

### *Peter Tchaikovsky, Composer*



Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky was born in Russia in 1840. He loved and created great music all his life. Music was a big part of Peter Tchaikovsky's schoolwork. His class often went to plays and operas together. He sang in the school choir and took piano lessons. Tchaikovsky was born in Russia where music was not considered a proper profession. It was only encouraged as a pastime for young ladies from wealthy families. The only Russian music that was really heard were the folk songs of the peasants and the choral singing in the church services. At first there weren't many schools that even offered training for Russian musicians. That all changed during Tchaikovsky's lifetime.

Peter Tchaikovsky became a full-time music student when he was 22 years old. He enrolled in the Russian Musical Society. It was like going to university. When he graduated, he moved to Moscow to become a professor at the Music Conservatory there. Peter Tchaikovsky composed operas, ballets, orchestral music, fantasy overtures, chamber music, piano music and vocal music as well. Tchaikovsky is famous for using Russian folk themes in many of his works.

Here is a list of some of Tchaikovsky's compositions you may know or want to listen to:

*Romeo and Juliet*

*Swan Lake*

*The Maid of Orleans*

*Queen of Spades*

*Piano Concerto No. 1*

*The Nutcracker Suite*

*The 1812 Overture*

When Tchaikovsky was 51, he left Russia to do a very successful music tour in North America. He even came to see the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. In 1893, two years after that North American tour, Peter died. His funeral was held in St. Petersburg. Huge numbers of people attended Tchaikovsky's funeral. Everyone wanted to show their respect for a great musician. Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky was buried in a little Russian village that he loved.

## BASIC BALLET POSITIONS

Source: *Connexions*® <http://cnx.org> by Alex Volschenk

Every new step you will learn will make use of the basic positions. All dancers, even the greatest, use exactly these positions every day.

Positions of the Feet:

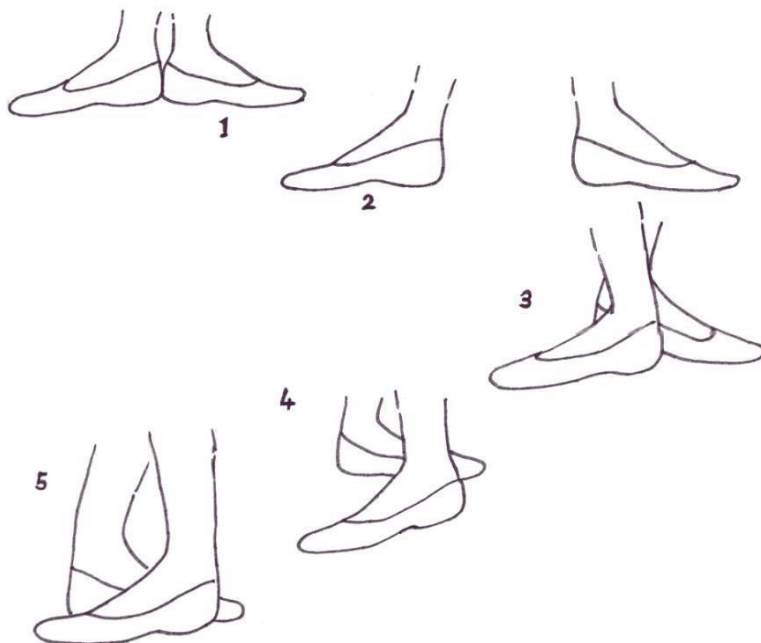
**FIRST POSITION:** turn your feet out to the side with your heels touching – turn your whole leg out at the hip, not just the foot.

**SECOND POSITION:** turn your toes out on the same line as first position – stand with feet apart – the space between your heels should be about the length of one of your feet – place the whole of both feet on the floor – don't roll forwards and put too much weight on your big toes.

**THIRD POSITION:** cross one foot halfway in front of the other – your weight should be balanced evenly on both feet.

**FOURTH POSITION:** place one foot exactly in front of the other with some space between them.

**FIFTH POSITION:** your feet should be turned out, fully crossed and touching each other firmly.





## BALLET TERMS

<b>Adage:</b> In ballet, a slow section of a pas de deux or an exercise in a dance class focusing on slow controlled movements that highlight balance and extension, and require strength and poise.
<b>Adagio:</b> The part of a dance class where exercises for balance and sustained movement are performed; a musical composition performed at a slow tempo.
<b>Alignment:</b> Creating harmony with the body so that unbroken lines are formed with the arms and legs without displacement of the torso.
<b>Arabesque:</b> In ballet, a pose held on one leg with the other leg and both arms extended away and up from the centre of the body; also, positioning of the arms in relation to the legs. As with positions of the feet, each position is distinguished by a number, such as first, second and third arabesque.
<b>Barre:</b> A horizontal pole, either attached to the wall or freestanding, to support dancers while stretching, warming up or doing exercises "at the barre". Barre exercises like pliés, battements and ronds de jambe form the first part of a traditional ballet class and are the basis for all technique.
<b>Battement:</b> In ballet, the "beating" of either a stretched or flexed leg. The types are : a battement tendu, a battement dégagé, a battement fondu, a petit battement et a grand battement.
<b>Corps de ballet:</b> In ballet, performers who do not have lead roles and perform during group scenes or action. In narrative ballets, members of the corps de ballet will perform roles such as peasants, wedding guests and swans.
<b>Enchaînement:</b> A "chain" or linked sequence of movements.
<b>Turnout:</b> A way of standing and using the legs that is initiated in the pelvis, where both sides of the body rotate outwards from the hips, away from the spine.
<b>Pas de deux:</b> In ballet, a sequence or dance for two dancers.
<b>Pirouette:</b> In ballet, a spin or turn of the body performed on one leg. Pirouettes may be performed <b>en dehors</b> (turning away from the supporting leg) or <b>en dedans</b> (turning toward the supporting leg).
<b>Plié:</b> In ballet, a bending of the knees. This can be done either in <b>demi-plié</b> ("half-plié"), where the heels remain on the floor, or in <b>grand plié</b> (large or full plié), where, except in second position of the feet, the heels leave the floor at the deepest point of the bend.
<b>Port de bras:</b> In ballet, arm movements around the body.
<b>Ronde de jambe:</b> In ballet, a movement that goes "round the leg". A <i>rond de jambe</i> may be performed in two ways: <b>À terre</b> ("on the ground"), where the pointed toe of a stretched working leg traces a circular pattern <b>en dehors</b> (from the front of the body to the back), or <b>en dedans</b> (from back to front), passing each time through first position of the feet.  <b>En l'air</b> ("in the air"), either <b>petit</b> , with the working leg raised just a few centimeters from the ground, or <b>grand</b> , where it is raised to 90°. A rond de jambe en l'air may also be performed as an isolated movement with the working leg raised <b>à la seconde</b> (to the side) and the knee bending and straightening as the toe describes quick circular patterns in the air without moving the thigh.

## WATCHING AND APPRECIATING DANCE

### CURRICULUM CONNECTION – Reflecting, Responding and Analysing

Attending Dance Matinees at the NAC, and using questions and activities here and in Student Activity Section, are intended to develop students' competency in applying *The Critical Analysis Process* for all grades, in The Arts (Ontario) Curriculum Grades 1-12.

A ballet is a choreographic composition interpreted by the dancers. Each dancer tells a story in movement and pantomime. There are no words spoken in a ballet. Watch the show and look for the choreography, the movement, gestures and facial expressions of each dancer and how they work in relationship to each other. In dance there are basic elements that are always present in this live art form, where the body is the dancer's instrument of expression. Try to recognize the elements of dance such as the placement of the body, whether the body is moving through space or on the spot, type and quality of the movement, the timing and musicality, how space is used, the energy and the relationship between the dancers. Each person watching may have different interpretations about what they saw and how they felt. All are valid.

Relax, breathe deeply and open yourself to the spirit of dance.

#### During the show, watch for:

- ✓ The dancer's movements, such as the dance technique used of jumps, pirouettes, and ballet positions of the feet, as well as the emotions and facial expressions used.
- ✓ How the dancers use the space on stage.
- ✓ Your real impressions of the piece during the show, for example: excitement, curiosity, frustration, surprise, sadness, humour etc.
- ✓ The combination of sequences or *enchaînements* and shapes on stage.
- ✓ The relationship between the choreography, the music, the props, costumes and set.

# ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS



# NUTCRACKER

## Word Search

AUDIENCE  
BALLERINA  
CHARACTER  
CHOREOGRAPHER  
CLASSICAL  
COMPOSER  
CONDUCTOR  
COSTUME  
CROWN  
DANCE  
NUTCRACKER

KINGDOM  
ORCHESTRA  
PERFORMANCE  
POINTE  
PRESENTS  
REHEARSAL  
RUSSIA  
SHOE  
RAT KING  
TALE  
TUTU

V	X	H	R	C	L	A	S	S	I	C	A	L	T	D
D	A	N	C	E	M	O	D	G	N	I	K	Z	A	F
X	A	L	A	S	R	A	E	H	E	R	U	I	L	I
X	N	N	S	H	O	E	U	C	R	O	W	N	E	Z
S	T	N	E	S	E	R	P	O	I	N	T	E	C	B
T	Z	J	R	E	A	R	T	S	E	H	C	R	O	N
X	E	C	N	E	I	D	U	A	I	P	X	J	S	U
I	O	C	D	F	A	I	S	S	U	R	U	O	T	T
E	C	N	A	M	R	O	F	R	E	P	P	M	U	C
Z	D	C	H	A	R	A	C	T	E	R	G	Q	M	R
D	L	B	A	L	L	E	R	I	N	A	Y	R	E	A
G	C	O	M	P	O	S	E	R	R	T	H	G	I	C
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## ACTIVITY WORK SHEET

Name:

Age:

Grade:

What was your favorite part of the *Nutcracker* ballet?

Draw a picture of it here:



Describe your favorite part here:

Did you enjoy watching the ballet? Why or Why not?

Was this the first ballet performance you've seen? YES / NO

Would you like to see more ballet? YES / NO

## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS

Movement is an integral part of the ballet experience. Below are a few more exercises for younger students to participate in to get them engaged in the theatre-going process.

1. Dancing is the communication of dialogue or emotion through movement rather than words. Choose a section of a story that you are reading in class and communicate it through movement or expressions rather than words. Ask the students to laugh if the character finds something funny; to frown if the character becomes sad, or to show fearful faces if the character is scared.
2. The corps de ballet consists of dancers who dance together in one group on stage. They must work together to create the beautiful patterns that we see on stage. Students can also work together to create a simple dance. Here would be an example:
  - a. Holding hands in one big circle, everyone walks 8 steps to the right and stops.
  - b. Walk 4 steps into the middle of the circle. Then, walk four steps out of the circle.
  - c. Everybody lets go of each other's hands. Bend to touch the ground and then reach up high into the sky.
  - d. Hold hands once again and repeat to the left
  - e. Add on one movement sequence that you or the students create, and repeat.
3. In the Nutcracker there are many different characters and creatures represented. Along with costumes, the quality of the movement and the choreography used expresses the different types of animals or characters. Movement quality defines a specific use of weight, tension and flow. Through changing movement quality students can express themselves in many different ways. Begin by discussing and imitating how the soldiers or rats moved in the show:

THE SOLDIERS: heavy movement, strong, precise and big arm gestures. Experiment and explore imitating how the soldiers moved. Create a movement sequence of walks, jumps, travelling through space and on the spot, moving like a soldier.

THE RATS: quick and small movements, bold jumps and arms darting out from the body, travelling in zigzags, jerky, through the space. Create a movement sequence of runs, jumps, turns and jumps using all the space you have.
4. Then explore your favorite character in the show and get inspired by his/her movements.

THE NUTCRACKER – describe the movement qualities of this character, then explore.

CLARA – describe the movement qualities of this character, then explore.
5. Have the students choose an animal of their choice; explore how that animal moves and describe, in words, the movement qualities the animal possess when it moves. Create a movement sequence that can be memorized and repeated and perform for each other. Try to match similar and contrasting movement qualities of the animals and perform them in small groups.



6. The Nutcracker is a story set during Christmas. Use the show as a way of discussing how students and their family celebrate special holidays from religions and cultures of the world.
7. Have the children make a 'ticket' for the *Nutcracker*. What is listed on a ticket to a performance (Name of the show, Time, Date, etc.)? How much does the ticket cost? Role-play with selling tickets (sell tickets to different shows at different costs), collecting tickets, and entering the performance.

### POST-SHOW QUIZ

- 1) What is the name of the principal character in this ballet?
- 2) When was the *Nutcracker* first performed?
- 3) What holiday is being celebrated?
- 4) Who gives Clara the nutcracker?
- 5) Who composed the music for *Nutcracker*?
- 6) Which Canadian ballet company performs this production?
- 7) Who reigns over the kingdom of the sweets?
- 8) After killing the Mouse King what does the Nutcracker become?
- 9) How many regions/countries are represented in the dances performed in the Kingdom?
- 10) What country is this *Nutcracker* set in?

## **ANSWERS TO QUIZ**

1. Clara
2. December 1892
3. Christmas
4. Mr. Drosselmyer
5. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
6. Royal Winnipeg Ballet
7. The Sugar Plum Fairy
8. A handsome human prince
9. 4 – Spain, Arabia, China, Russia
10. Canada

## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS FOR OLDER STUDENTS

- 1) Write a creative short story about your visit to The National Arts Centre to see Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Use the following sentence as a starting point:

*It all began when I sat down in my seat at The National Arts Centre to see Royal Winnipeg Ballet perform...*

- 2) This *Nutcracker*, by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, is a set in Canada production. Discuss with your students how the production is made to be Canadian. Use this as a basis for discussion around national identity. What does it mean to be a Canadian? How is this identity constructed? Have your students imagine what the production would be like if it was set in a different country or different time period. What would it look like? Have them design their own modern *Nutcracker* set in a location and time period of their choice.
- 3) Have students create their own modern *Nutcracker* story. What would the different characters do or say in modern times?
- 4) Why do you think this ballet has become such a classic that it still resonates with audiences today? Compare and contrast classic ballets with classic novels or pieces of music. Why did they stand the test of time?
- 5) What similarities and differences does ballet have with other dance forms, such as modern, break dance, jazz dance, folk dance, Latin dance?
- 6) Compare the qualities of professional dancers with professional athletes. What are their similarities and differences?

## MORE QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Summarize the story of the ballet.
- Talk about your first impressions of the ballet.
- What part of the show was your favourite?
- How were the various parts of the performance different? How were they the same?
- Describe the movements and choreography you saw; describe the music; describe the set and costumes.
- Discuss the relationship between choreography and dance, music, lighting, costume, set and props.
- How did the dancers tell the story without any words? How did their movements and dancing express a story?
- Did the dancers express different emotions during the ballet? What emotions did you see?
- What emotions did you feel when watching the ballet?
- Dancers play different characters in the ballet. How did the dancer's movements let you know which character they were playing?
- Which character was your favourite, why? Describe the movement of the dancer in words and by trying to move like that character. What type of movement was used (Low, high, sustained, light, heavy, fast slow, jump, pirouette, rond de jambe, plié, battement, etc.) Refer to section later in the guide on ballet technique and ask your students to look for and identify the technique in the show.
- How did the costume, wigs, make-up, help to portray a character?
- How did the music affect or influence the dance?

*We'd love to hear from you!*

*Please send completed assignments to:*

The National Arts Centre, Arts Alive

1 Elgin Street, Ottawa ON K1P 5W1

[education@nac-cna.ca](mailto:education@nac-cna.ca)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT THE OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Compiled by Rebekah McCallum, Children's Services,  
Ottawa Public Library



The Nutcracker and the Mouse King	Maysen, Wren	398.2 Mayse
The Nutcracker	Jeffers, Susan	JEFFE
The Nutcracker	Koppe, Susanne	KOPPE
The Nutcracker	Hague, Michael	HAGUE
The Barefoot Book of Ballet Stories	Yolen, Jane	792.84 Y54

### History, Facts, and Activities

Corbett, Pie	<i>Dancing and Singing Games</i>	J 796.13 Dan
Lundsten, Apryl	<i>Dance!</i>	J 792.8 L962
Malam, John	<i>Song and Dance</i>	J 780.9 Mal
Maze, Stephanie	<i>I Want to Be a Dancer</i>	J 792.802 Maze
Murphy, Liz	<i>A Dictionary of Dance</i>	J 792.803 M978
Wilson, Sarah	<i>The Day We Danced in Underpants</i>	J PIC Wilso

### Dance Around the World

Ancona, George	<i>Capoeira</i>	J 793.31981 A542
Collins, Pat Lowery	<i>I am a Dancer</i>	J PIC Colli
Connolly, Liz	<i>Let's Dance</i>	J ER 792.8 C752
Grau, Andrée	<i>Dance</i>	J 792.8 G774 2000
Hudak, Heather C.	<i>Cultures of Canada: Dance</i>	J ESL 792.8 Dance
Jonas, Ann	<i>Color Dance</i>	J PIC Jonas
McMahon, Patricia	<i>Dancing Wheels</i>	J 792.8087 M167
Meadows, Daisy	<i>Serena, the Salsa Fairy</i>	PB FIC Meado
Morris, Neil	<i>Music and Dance</i>	J 793.31 Mor
Raczek, Linda Theresa	<i>Rainy's Powwow</i>	J F Rac
Spalding, Andrea	<i>Secret of the Dance</i>	J FIC Spald
Thomas, Mark	<i>African Dancing</i>	J 793.3196 T459

### Ballet

Burgess, Melvin	<i>Billy Elliot</i>	J PB FIC Burge
Bray-Moffat, Naia	<i>Ballet School</i>	J 792.8 B827
Ellison, Nancy	<i>Becoming a Ballerina</i>	J 792.8 E47
Gladstone, Valerie	<i>A Young Dancer</i>	J 792.80973 G543
Holabird, Katherine	<i>Angelina Ballerina</i>	J PIC Holab
Isadora, Rachel	<i>On Your Toes: A Ballet ABC</i>	J 792.8 I74
Lee, Laura	<i>A Child's Introduction to Ballet</i>	J 792.8 L478
Littlesugar, Amy	<i>Marie in Fourth Position</i>	J PIC L
Mayhew, James	<i>Ella Bella Ballerina and the Sleeping Beauty</i>	J PIC Mayhe
McMullan, Kate	<i>Noel the First</i>	J PIC M
Streatfeild, Noel	<i>Ballet Shoes</i>	J PB FIC Strea
Tatchell, Judy	<i>World of Ballet</i>	J 792.8 Tat
Young, Amy	<i>Belinda the Ballerina</i>	J PIC Young

## INTERNET RESOURCES

Royal Winnipeg Ballet: [www.rwb.org](http://www.rwb.org)

National Arts Centre: [www.nac-cna.ca](http://www.nac-cna.ca)

## DANCE AND ARTS EDUCATION WEBSITES

ArtsAlive: [www.artsvivants.ca](http://www.artsvivants.ca)

Council of Drama and Dance in Education (Ontario): [www.code.on.ca](http://www.code.on.ca)

Kennedy Centre (USA) : [www.artsedge.kennedy-centre.org](http://www.artsedge.kennedy-centre.org)

Association canadienne pour la santé, l'éducation physique, le loisir et la danse: [www.cahperd.ca](http://www.cahperd.ca)

## CANADIAN BALLET COMPANIES

The National Ballet of Canada: [www.national.ballet.ca](http://www.national.ballet.ca)

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal : [www.grandsballets.com](http://www.grandsballets.com)

Ballet British Columbia (Ballet BC): [www.balletbc.com](http://www.balletbc.com)

Alberta Ballet: [www.albertaballet.com](http://www.albertaballet.com)

Ballet Jorgen: [www.balletjorgen.ca](http://www.balletjorgen.ca)

## BALLET RESOURCES

ABT - American Ballet Theatre Library: Ballet Dictionary and Repertory Archive, USA: <http://www.abt.org/education/library.asp>

American Ballet Theatre's Ballet Dictionary:  
[www.abt.org/education/dictionary/index.html](http://www.abt.org/education/dictionary/index.html)

Ballet.co, R.-U: <http://www.ballet.co.uk>

## ONLINE PUBLICATIONS ABOUT DANCE

Dance Collection Danse: [www.dcd.ca](http://www.dcd.ca)

The Dance Current: [www.thedancecurrent.com](http://www.thedancecurrent.com)

Dance International Magazine: [www.danceinternational.org](http://www.danceinternational.org)

Dance Magazine: [www.dancemagazine.com](http://www.dancemagazine.com)





This guide was written and created by Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet and  
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### **National Youth and Education Trust**

The *National Youth and Education Trust* is the primary resource for youth and education funding at the National Arts Centre. Supporters of the Trust help the National Arts Centre pursue priority initiatives through the performing arts that nurture and develop the creativity of young people in all regions across Canada and support the educators and artists who challenge and encourage them.

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