

Nouvelles du Ballet

Newsletter of Champaign Urbana Ballet

New Twists in Store for 2007 Nutcracker

This year's performances of *The Nutcracker* will feature several innovations to keep the ballet fresh for local audiences. The opening night performance on November 30 will officially kick off Champaign Urbana Ballet's 10th production of this Christmas-season classic, with the University of Illinois' Chancellor Richard Herman in a special, one-appearance guest performance as Mother Ginger. Kristin Feddersen will appear as Mother Ginger in the remaining five performances. There will be a gala reception following the opening night performance in the lobby of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.

For several years, Andy Warfel has been the driving force behind *The Nutcracker's* scenery. This year, Warfel's brother, David, will use his technological expertise to incorporate video animation into the transition scenes, adding movement where before, there was only static lighting. "The more you can make the ballet a magical experience for the audience, the better it is," said Tracy McCabe, the producer. "The

scenery will be a combination of video and backdrop; for example, in the Act 1 party scene, the panes of the windows in the Stahlbaum home will be cut out, and projection from the front and behind the set will create the effect of snow falling outside the windows. Dur-



Mother Ginger and her Polichinelles

ing the battle scene, there will be flashes of cannon fire. During the snow scene, ice formations will be visible. What's interesting is you will be watching the ballet not as a collection of scenes but as a story that keeps transforming before your eyes."

Also new in 2007 will be Mother Ginger's costume, which has served the

Ballet for 10 years. Construction of the new getup (infrastructure and costume) is a collaboration between CU Ballet's production team; a local welder; local designer Taya Ross, who selected the fabrics; and Anne DeVelder, who is making the dress.

The cost to the Ballet will be "at least \$5,000, which—for CUB—is huge but we needed to spend the money to make the getup safer and make it last," said McCabe. "This whole process started in June 2007. We're still working on it, and we'll probably be working on it up till opening night!"

The Polichinelles—the tiny little dancing dolls that come out from under the big skirt of Mother Ginger—are also getting new costumes. Jill Kyong is constructing costumes that look like teacups. Mother Ginger and the Polichinelles are perennial crowd-pleasers, and the new costumes (plus Chancellor Herman's special appearance) will surely add to the delight.

Sharing the Nutcracker Magic

Tickets for Kids (TFK) is Champaign Urbana Ballet's signature outreach program. This year, TFK aims to send over 120 local children and families who otherwise would not be able to attend to a performance of *The Nutcracker*. We are grateful to the Community Assistance Fund of the Junior League of Champaign-Urbana for their contribution of \$270, and to

the Orange Krush Foundation for their contribution of \$1,550. Schnucks continues as the TFK's long-standing premier sponsor. (Schnucks also generously makes in-kind donations of ballerina cupcakes for the performances.) These generous grants from our community partners and individual donors help to spread the holiday cheer all around.



The "littlest" of The Nutcracker cast display a "big" donation from the Orange Krush Foundation.

From the Artistic Director



**Deanna Doty,
Artistic Director**

Greetings...and congratulations to Champaign Urbana Ballet and its

community of family and friends on 10 years of dancing, sewing, constructing, educating, fundraising, serving and thriving, and having a blast while we do it!

I have not dared to dream that we could be so firmly rooted as we are today. Many of you know how we have struggled, and what we have had to overcome. What a surprise it still is when someone takes our company to heart and something wonderful grows from it. If a scholarship is created, another child gets to dance. If a costume is created, if a set is built, another beautiful production goes up on stage. Tickets For Kids, fundraisers, collaborations with local artists, newsletters, arts festivals, outreach programs...every effort roots us deeper to our community and fuels

the opportunities we can give back. I think people continue to become involved because it is a vastly satisfying thing, and the results grow before your eyes.

We are strong enough now, after 10 years of growth, that if one part becomes weak, we will not fail. But any living thing needs to be maintained and nourished to thrive, and our weakest root right now is in fundraising. We have spent the past decade building our dancers, our repertory, our infrastructure, our costume department, our props and sets, our links to artists and other collaborators in the community. Help us to maintain these hard-won administrative and artistic achievements, and join us as we dance our way through the next 10 years!

Many Thanks to Our 2007 Partners

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Company Celebrates Its 10th Anniversary

In 10 short years, Champaign Urbana Ballet has grown from a company with a handful of dancers to a full-fledged company. Here are some important company milestones:

1998: The company is formed with three members on the Board of Directors, with Deanna Doty as its Artistic Director. CU Ballet's first performance takes place in October 1998 at The Taste of the Arts at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts (KCPA), with selections from *La Bayadère* and *Paquita*. During the holiday season, CU Ballet participates in several community events by performing several dances from Act II of *The Nutcracker*.

1999: CU Ballet puts on its first—and what is to become an annual—spring production. *Le Pas de Quatre* and selections from *Coppélia*, with performances by visiting Illinois guest

artists, are performed at Parkland College Theatre. Under the sponsorship of KCPA and in collaboration with the East Central Illinois Youth Orchestra, CU Ballet presents *The Nutcracker Suite* with free performances for children from public schools in Champaign County.

2001: CU Ballet performs its first full-length *Nutcracker*, danced to taped music at Parkland College Theatre. All four performances are sold out.

2002: Six performances of *The Nutcracker* again sell out at Parkland; two additional performances are added to meet audience demand.

2003: CU Ballet's *The Nutcracker* is moved to the Tryon Festival Theatre at KCPA, with live musical accompaniment by Sinfonia da Camera and the Central Illinois Children's Chorus.

2006: CU Ballet moves into its new office, hires a part-time company manager, consolidates all sets into one storage facility, and opens a costume shop dedicated to construction and storage of costumes.

2008: CU Ballet will celebrate its 10th anniversary, with two spring productions and a splendid gala celebration.

Summer Intensives

While summer means time to relax for many of us, dancing never stops for Champaign Urbana Ballet dancers! Many of our company and apprentice dancers engage in ballet enrichment opportunities around the nation to improve their technique and artistry.

Here are the 2007 Summer Intensive courses in which our company dancers participated:

Joffrey Ballet (Chicago, IL): Alexis Hedge, Claire Liu, Bailie Roy, Sophia Shenk

Nutmeg Conservatory for the Arts (Connecticut): Chloe Cooper

Walnut Hill (Massachusetts): Ashler Uebele

Milwaukee Ballet (Wisconsin): Mason Anders

Champaign Ballet Academy (CBA) Intensive: Mason Anders, Simone Ballard, Elizabeth Bansner, Tuli Bera, Chloe Cooper, Alexis Hedge, Erica Johnston, Abbi Kaesberg, Karolina Kalbarczyk, Claire Liu, Bailie Roy, Alexandra Warwick

Summer Intensive with Nurlan Abougaliyev at CBA: Mason Anders, Simone Ballard, Tuli Bera, Chloe Cooper, Claire Daly, Alexis Hedge, Erica Johnston, Abbi Kaesberg, Karolina Kalbarczyk, Charlie Kessler, Claire Liu, Bailie Roy, Sophia Shenk, Alexandra Warwick, Gina Wojnar



Photo by Dan Merlo

Aurora (Tuli Bera) and *Prince Désiré* (Mason Anders) are shown in the vision scene from the spring 2007 performance of **Sleeping Beauty**. In the background are the Lilac Fairy attendants, with Crystal Mann as the Lilac Fairy. The company danced four performances, from May 18 to 20, at Parkland College Theatre. "This was the first time we offered a children's matinée, which featured a one-hour version of the ballet," said Michelle Ziegler, the company's ballet mistress. "The matinée was completely sold out. Many people commented on how affordable it was, and also how appropriate it was for younger children who cannot sit through two and a half hours of ballet."

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Enriching & Inspiring the Community since 1998



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WWW.CUBALLET.COM

Paquita and Coppélia To Be Staged in Spring



For the first time in the company's history, Champaign Urbana Ballet will be staging **two** story ballets in the spring of 2008.

On March 8, the company will perform *Paquita* at the Virginia Theatre in downtown Champaign. *Paquita* is considered a lavish ballet because of the Spanish style and musical variety that includes a glorious pas de deux and variations, with music by Leon Minkus. The company's Artistic Director, Deanna Doty, chose to stage *Paquita* for its focus on dynamic technical skill with a Spanish flair and its emphasis on pure dance over character.

On May 23-25 at the Parkland College Theatre, the company will stage *Coppélia*, a comic story ballet that involves Franz, who becomes infatuated with a lifelike doll invented by the mysterious Dr. Coppélius. Dismayed by Franz's

behavior, his fiancée Swanilda shows him his folly by dressing as the doll and pretending to come to life. This work was chosen for its contrast with *Paquita*: for its charm, its appropriateness to the age of the company dancers, and the opportunity for the dancers to work on dramatic skills and character work.

"This spring should provide a well-rounded education to our company dancers, with opportunities for older dancers to perform twice," said Doty.

Find more information about spring performances on our Web site at www.cuballet.com.