



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ballet Minnesota Reenacts a Fairytale with the 35th annual The Classic Nutcracker, Dec. 15-17 at the O'Shaughnessy

*A highly stacked cast transforms this beloved
holiday tradition into reality*

Saint Paul, MN – Ballet Minnesota celebrates the holiday season with their 35th outstanding production of **The Classic Nutcracker at The O'Shaughnessy**, and a special performance at the MSP International Airport. **Special guest soloists**, Nicole Fedorov and Kaitaro Kodama will dance the *pas de deux* in the signature roles of Sugar Plum Fairy and the Cavalier. The performances take place on the campus of St. Catherine University, 2004 Randolph Ave., Saint Paul, Dec. 15-17, 2023. Ticket prices range from \$5 to \$45 with discounts for seniors and groups. To purchase tickets, visit The [O'Shaughnessy's online box office](#), or call the box office at 651-690-6700. The Mpls/St. Paul Intl. Airport performance will take place November 19 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. In addition, a free livestream of a performance at 10:30 a.m. Friday, Dec. 15 will be broadcasted to the wider community to provide the ballet experience to those who might

not otherwise be able to attend a performance. Register for the livestream with the link below

<https://balletminnesota.org/product/the-classic-nutcracker-livestream/> .

Soloists and Casting Updates



Kaitaro Kodama

This winter, Ballet Minnesota introduces three new sparkling cast members and two special guests to the production. Abigail Lange will premiere as **Clara**, the heroine of the story. The following two performers are coincidentally sisters! For her second year in the company while being a current UofM student, Zoe Charais can be seen dancing as the **Snow Queen**.

Olive Charais is cast as **Rose**. These sisters are originally from Marine on St. Croix and have been dancing since younger than five years old. The two guest stars include Kaitaro

Kodama as Cavalier, and Nicole Fedorov as the Sugar Plum. Kaitaro is currently a company member of the First State Ballet Theatre and the Connecticut Ballet. Nicole Fedorov, in her role, will take center stage, exuding a captivating blend of sweetness and elegance. She is a principle also with the First State Ballet Theater in Wilmington, Delaware.



Nicole Fedorov

To top it all off, Ballet Minnesota has three returning male stars that are back for good reason. Robert Clearly can be seen as **Herr Drosselmeyer** for his 25th year in the production! Matthew Halpaus brings his cavalier charm to his second season as the **Nutcracker Prince**. Lastly, Aaron Davies will return as the **Snow Prince**. Aaron began dancing in 2003 and has been a company member of Ballet Minnesota since 2012. More than 100 dancers make up the full cast for this Holiday Classic. Do not miss out on the chance to see beautiful artistry from both the young students and seasoned professional dancers.

The Classic Nutcracker Production and Story

Ballet Minnesota's company veterans and apprentices, along with a host of students fill out the roles ranging from the luminary Clara to the youngest dancers as scampering mice and winged angels who seem to float on and off the stage. Enchanted sets further the magic with an adrenaline-filled battle, a fire-breathing dragon, lollipop swings appearing along with Madame Ginger, and gentle snow falling on the corps de ballet at the close of Act I.

To brush up on your knowledge of this holiday classic, we begin on Christmas Eve in the cozy home of a young girl, Clara, her mischievous brother, Fritz, and their family hosting a Christmas party. A latecomer to the party is Clara's mysterious Godfather Drosselmeyer. Clara's Godfather presents her

with a marvelous gift, a Nutcracker doll. As Clara drifts asleep that night, the audience is transported into her dream. As Clara tip-toes back to the living room she is met by the life sized and animated Rat King and Nutcracker. A battle then ensues with an army of soldiers in Clara's living room. After successfully defeating the Rat King, the Nutcracker's spell is broken and he becomes Prince once again. The Nutcracker Prince along with the Snow Queen and Prince, escort Clara into the Kingdom of the Sweets. During this trip, Clara is given a tiara for defeating the Rat King and breaking the Nutcracker's spell. A beautiful festival ensues and the visit peaks with a grand *pas de deux* danced by the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier. Clara awakes from her dream and cannot decipher what was real or fake.

Ballet Minnesota and Classical Ballet Academy of Minnesota Background

Husband and wife team, Andrew and Cheryl Rist, are at the helm of **Classical Ballet Academy of MN**, founded in 1987, and **Ballet Minnesota**, which they co-founded in 1990. Andrew Rist serves as Ballet Minnesota's artistic director and Cheryl Rist serves as Ballet Minnesota's Regisseur, costume designer and director of Classical Ballet Academy, the company's official school for dancers ages 4 to 18. To view Ballet Minnesota's performance history and press ready photos, visit www.balletminnesota.org.

Shows and Ticket Information

Purchase your tickets now by calling The O'Shaughnessy box office at 651-690-6700. Ask about group rates! Order online at [O'Shaughnessy Box Office](#)

Public Performances:

Friday, December 15, 7 p.m.

Saturday, December 16, 2 p.m.

Sunday, December 17, 2 p.m.

Tickets: \$5-\$45; special group rates are available.

For live streaming visit this link <https://balletminnesota.org/product/the-classic-nutcracker-livestream/> and for student group ticket information, email oshaughnessy@stkate.edu or call 651-690-6700.



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