

The Studio & Santa Cruz Ballet Theatre | partners in excellence serving Santa Cruz County for over 30 years
Robert Kelley and Diane Cypher, Artistic Directors | Sandy Nelson, Administrative Manager | Mark Swan, SCBT Board President

Congratulations *“Nutcracker” Dancers!*

On Saturday, September 23, 74 dancers auditioned for our annual production of “The Nutcracker,” and all were cast in this year’s production. Most of the dancers study at The Studio, School of Classical Ballet, but additional dancers from Elaine’s Dance Studio, San Jose, Los Gatos and Hollister also earned roles.

The dancers begin rehearsals on September 30, and will continue working hard through the performances in December. **Tickets go on sale Tuesday, October 10** — purchase tickets early for best seats! The performances have SOLD OUT the last few years.

A unique tradition for a small town: ALL PERFORMANCES WITH LIVE ORCHESTRA! Don’t be misled by other productions in the area, the Santa Cruz Ballet Theatre “Nutcracker” is the only local version with 52 professional musicians, led by our esteemed Music Director Pamela Martin. The orchestra is visible in front of the stage, an added treat for adults and children alike.

Season Kick-Off Event *Sunday, October 29*

5:00 pm

Portuguese Hall

216 Evergreen St, near Harvey West Park

Performance by the Petite Company!

Get to know our wonderful SCBT community in this fun social event ~ sign up to bring something to share on the bulletin board at The Studio. Purchase tickets in the office during office hours 3-5:00 pm weekdays.



The Nutcracker Prince tells Clara’s story to the Sugar Plum Fairy, her Cavalier and divertissements in the Opening of Act II. Guest artists Kaelyn Magee and Michal Wozniak with Santa Cruz Ballet Theatre Orchestra in front of stage. Photo of 2016 production by Michael Gerald-Yamasaki;

DANCERS TACKLE CHALLENGING ROLES

The cast of "The Nutcracker" has begun rehearsals and many challenges await our dancers. Many dancers repeat roles, some even return to the same role they had two years back along with other assignments. During the auditions, our Artistic Directors have the dancers do the actual steps which will be required by different roles they may aspire to. This includes our youngest dancers, who have to tackle skipping on the music for Ginger Snaps (a task which is not as easy as it sounds), smile confidently while doing a beautiful arabesque plié for Party Children, and accomplishing the difficult coordination and stamina required of the Chinese Children choreography. There are no small roles! Each and every dancer plays an important part of the whole that we present to 5,000 audience members in December. Congratulations to all who auditioned!

The more advanced the dancer, the more competition there is for specific roles, especially roles en pointe. Dancers cast as Ribbon Dancers or in Waltz of the Flowers will have to display

grace, artistry and musicality on stage, while being spatially aware and working together as a group. Our most advanced dancers share roles, and depending on heights, available male partners, and other factors, our directors make every effort to put our "best foot forward" for the audience to enjoy, while challenging each dancer to achieve their potential.

For some of our dancers this means repeating a role and dancing it with more finesse and confidence. For others, this means being challenged with new roles and sometimes revisiting a role already danced in the past, but with new artistic and technical ability. We are excited to see how each and every one of our "Nutcracker" cast meets the particular challenges they are faced with. Some of our company dancers have understudied roles they will dance this year, but there are so many factors that go into casting, as mentioned above, that understudies do not necessarily end up performing the role. The most important thing to cherish is that each dancer grows from the experience. Happy rehearsing! We hope you enjoy the work ahead.



Dancers come up through the ranks in more challenging roles. Top, left to right: the Snow Queen, Clara, Chinese Tea soloist and Children. Bottom: the Snow Queen and King with Snowflakes; Clara and the Nutcracker Prince downstage left. Photos from 2015 and 2016 by Michael Gerald-Yamasaki.