

TWIN CITIES BALLET

Beloved holiday classic
with a Minnesota twist!



A MINNESOTA NUTCRACKER

Directed & Choreographed by Denise & Rick Vogt

2 WEEKENDS, 2 LOCATIONS!

Dec. 13-15

AMES CENTER

Dec. 20-21

NORTHROP
AUDITORIUM

TwinCitiesBallet.org

WELCOME! We're delighted you've joined us for *A Minnesota Nutcracker*! This year, we're thrilled to present an even more Minnesotan twist on this beloved holiday classic. We have continued reimagining Act II to feature Minnesota icons and traditions, connecting our community to the magic of the Nutcracker like never before. These unique touches celebrate what makes Minnesota special while staying true to the timeless story, music, and traditions you know and love.

This vision embodies TCB's mission: to make ballet accessible, relatable, and fun and connect communities through professional productions and educational enrichment. From original full-length story ballets like *A Minnesota Nutcracker* to contemporary works and community initiatives, we strive to share the joy of dance with everyone.

We're proud to be leaders in inclusivity and accessibility. Since our inception, we've provided special performances for metro-area elementary students, seniors, and Special Education programs. In 2021, we introduced Minnesota's first Sensory-Relaxed Program, creating welcoming experiences for individuals and families with sensory sensitivities.

Looking ahead, join us in March for the World Premiere of *Romeo & Juliet: The Rock Ballet*, set to the iconic music of Queen and performed live by Mark Joseph's *Dragon Attack* at the Fitzgerald Theater. Then in May, we return to the Ames Center to close our season with the enchanting original ballet *Beauty & the Beast*, featuring a stunning, specially-composed score.

We're so grateful for your support. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the show!

Denise & Rick, Artistic Directors



Please Note:

- Silence all cell phones and electronic devices, and kindly refrain from using or referring to anything that emits light or sound during the show.
- For the safety and respect of our dancers and your fellow patrons, and to comply with Copyright laws, All Photography and All Video, Digital, or Audio taping of any kind is prohibited.

Thank you for your cooperation, and enjoy the performance!

TWIN CITIES BALLET STAFF & CREDITS

Artistic Directors

Denise Vogt & Rick Vogt

Choreography

Denise Vogt & Rick Vogt

Contributing Choreography

Sophie Addie & Tianna Votiso

Artistic Staff

Denise Vogt, Rick Vogt,
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Natalie Rossi, Tianna Votiso

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Rick Vogt

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Music

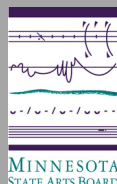
Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, The
Nutcracker, Op 71*

**Dance of the Loons Musical
Arrangement & Flute**

Mark Woerpel

**Music courtesy of Telarc International.*

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.



THE STORY

Act I

Drosselmeyer, a master toymaker, finishes crafting life-sized dolls in his workshop. He then strolls through snowy Rice Park in St. Paul greeting fellow revelers on his way to the Silberhaus family's annual Christmas Eve party. At their Summit Avenue home, the Silberhaus family prepares for the celebration. The children, Clara and Fritz, receive gifts and marvel at the glowing tree topped with a glorious star.

Guests arrive bringing presents. The festivities begin with music, dancing, and delightful surprises. Clara's mysterious Uncle and Godfather, Drosselmeyer, gives candy to the children and dazzles everyone with his dancing dolls. He gives Fritz a stuffed mouse and Clara a wooden Nutcracker. When Fritz accidentally breaks Clara's Nutcracker, Clara is distressed, but Drosselmeyer repairs it. The party winds down, and the guests depart.

Clara sneaks back to find her Nutcracker and is frightened to be surrounded by giant mice. The tree grows, and Drosselmeyer magically makes the Nutcracker life-sized. The Nutcracker leads his Elite Guards in a battle against the Mouse Queen and her Special Forces. Clara helps the Nutcracker defeat the Mouse Queen, and the Nutcracker becomes a real person. Together, they journey to the snow-covered banks of the Mississippi in Minneapolis, guided by the Golden Horses of the Minnesota Quadriga and tiny Show Angels. The travelers delight in watching the glittering Étoile du Nord and her Snow Cavalier dance amidst swirling Snowflakes.

Intermission

Act II

The beautiful Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier welcome the travelers at a grand palace. To honor Clara and the Nutcracker, magical dancers perform, showcasing Minnesota-inspired wonders. The majestic Golden Horses are followed by Minnesota Falling Waters, legendary Vikings, buzzing Mosquitos, elegant Loons and Loonlets, a Mississippi Riverboat Captain and playful Fish, and the Pink & White Lady's Slipper flower in a vibrant garden of Wildflowers. The celebration concludes with the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier dancing a magnificent Grand Pas de Deux. After a final waltz, Clara dreamily accepts her wooden Nutcracker doll from Drosselmeyer, who helps the drowsy Clara settle into sleep with her Nutcracker standing guard.

Was it only a dream?

THE CAST

Emerald: Friday 7:00pm, Saturday 2:00pm, Sunday 4:30pm

Ruby: Saturday 7:00pm, Sunday 1:00pm, Northrop shows

ACT I

Drosselmeyer: David Tlaiye

Mr. Silberhaus: Tyler Piwowarczyk

Mrs. Silberhaus: Michelle Ludwig

Clara: Elisabeth Moberg/Shania Cook

Fritz: Yariel Diaz Rios/Fiona Berkley

Maid: Ellie Aars

Butler: Kent Kane

Flower Seller: Agustina Pestel

Street Urchins: Cedric Dryden, Benjamin Epstein

Party Guest Children:

Clara's Best Friend: Sophia Krismanits

Children: Elizabeth Bainbridge, Sunny Beinke, Kalie Ford, Ashlyn Hansen, Brielle Heinsch, Hannah Holleran, Elijah Marciniak, Emily Rannow

Party Guest Adults: MaryClaire Whitley, Thomas Baxter, Shannon Moore, Hailey Stinchcomb, Lisandro Neris

Cadet: Isaac José

Ballerina Doll: Adriana Engebretson

Soldier Doll: Rebecca Epstein

Mouse Doll: Kelly Hylandsson

Nutcracker: Isaac José

Nutcracker Elite Guards: Maia Childress, Hana Childress

Soldiers: Emily Burnett, Grayson Cook, Jeremiah Dryden, Juliet Hickerson, Linnea Hylandsson, Madeline Jensen, Avery Lengsfeld, Claire Suh, Greta Syverson, Lola Tepley

Mouse Queen: Merrith Skaar

Mouse Queen Special Forces: Olivia Gorgas, Joanna Heup

Mice: Ulyana Afanasyeva, Penelope D'Errico, Clara Diamond, London Hansmeier, Catherine Johnson, Willa Koplin, Violet Kutz, Lila McArthur, Meadow Paulson, Kelsey Schmidt, Addie Williams, Elliette Wiplinger

L'Étoile du Nord & Snow Cavalier: Keara Nichols, Thomas Baxter

Snowflakes: Eleanor Boeshans, Cecilia Downey, Annika Engebretson, Sophie Freeman, Lillian Hanson, Hannah Hylandsson, Olivia Kapaun, Elizabeth LeVoir, Sophia Tiedje Oglesbee, Esther Olson, Agustina Pestel, Addison Webb

Angels Emerald Cast: Charlie Blanford, Hailey Broberg, Madison Conboy, Jackie Diaz-Rios, Kira Frazer, Posey Herig, Margaux Miller, Maggie Nelson, Keira Olson, Amelia Owen, Audrey Robinson-Hudson, Addison Rubio

Angels Ruby Cast: Charlie Blanford, Hailey Broberg, Madison Conboy, Kira Frazer, Posey Herig, Anna Kadrlík, Maggie Nelson, Keira Olson, Amelia Owen, Audrey Robinson-Hudson, Addison Rubio, Emma Yu

ACT II

Sugar Plum Fairy & Cavalier: Michelle Ludwig & Tyler Piwowarczyk/ Hailey Stinchcomb & Lisandro Neris

Crown Bearer: Layla Paulson

Land of Sweets Courtiers: Jade Burbank, Gabrielle Camp, Adriana Engebretson, Rebecca Epstein, Kelly Hylandsson, Seung-Yoon Lee, Amelya Qiu, Gabriella White

Minnesota Quadriga:

Prosperity: Merrith Skaar

Golden Horses: Addison Webb, Annika Engebretson, Mia Johnson, Audrey Orton

Falling Waters:

Leads: Keara Nichols & Thomas Baxter

Water: Cecilia Downey, Abbi Jacobson, Elizabeth LeVoir, Lila Murray

Vikings: Tyler Piwowarczyk/Lisandro Neris, Shannon Moore, Merrith Skaar, Olivia Gorgas

Dance of the Mosquitos: Ellie Aars, Maia Childress, Hana Childress

Lead Loons: Michelle Ludwig/Hailey Stinchcomb, Joanna Heup, MaryClaire Whitley

Loonlets: Emma Bainbridge, Lauren Dryden, Camille Heath, Alli Hobot, Linnea Hylandsson, Scarlett Mrnak, Kellyann Manning, Lucy Steiner, Claire Suh, Lola Tepley

Paddlewheel Riverboat Captain: Kent Kane

Lead Bluegill & Bluegills: Layla Paulson, Miller Conboy, Samantha Dahlen, Brynlee Orner, Meadow Paulson, Lily Rubio, Lauren Tran

Pink & White Lady's Slipper: Shannon Moore/MaryClaire Whitley

Lead Wildflowers: Ellie Aars, Lila Murray, Olivia Gorgas, Joanna Heup

Wildflowers: Maia Childress/Hana Childress, Sophie Freeman, Lillian Hanson, Abbi Jacobson, Olivia Kapaun, Esther Olson

OUR DIRECTORS

Denise Vogt, Artistic Director. A native of England, Denise danced professionally in Germany with the Kiel Capitol Theater Ballet, Osnabrück Contemporary Dance Theater and Kassel State Theater. She has over 40 years of choreographic experience, including the majority of TCB's original production of *A Minnesota Nutcracker*. Denise has taught in England, Los Angeles, and Germany, and locally at the University of Minnesota, the Classical Ballet Academy of Minnesota, the St. Paul Public School System, Ballet Arts Minnesota and the Minnesota Dance Theatre Company. Denise is Co-Director of Ballet Royale Minnesota, and a founder of TCB.

Rick Vogt, Associate Artistic Director. Rick trained with Jo Savino in St. Paul, San Francisco Ballet, and with Joffrey Ballet & David Howard in New York. He danced professionally as a Soloist and Principal dancer in Germany with Kiel Capitol Theater Ballet & Kassel State Theater, in the U.S. with Nevada Dance Theater & Utah Ballet, and as guest artist with Ballet Minnesota. He also danced with Ballet West, The Washington Ballet (D.C.), Arizona Dance Theater, Jazzin' Dance Co., in the musicals *West Side Story* and *Chicago*, and in the original movie *Footloose*. He is Co-Director of Ballet Royale Minnesota, and a founder of TCB.

OUR DANCERS

Thomas Baxter (*Snow Cavalier, Falling Waters Lead*) Born and raised in Northern California, Thomas trained at New Ballet School in San José, and was later promoted into New Ballet's professional company. With TCB, he has performed the roles of Snow King and Cascading Waters Lead in *A Minnesota Nutcracker*, and the Judge and the Father in TCB's original work, Pink Floyd's *The Wall: A Rock Ballet*. This is Thomas's second season with TCB.

Isaac José (*The Nutcracker, Cadet*) Isaac has danced with TCB since 2022. Born in Puerto Rico, Isaac trained at Dance and Arts Master, Escuela de Danza 21, and Centro Danza, an acclaimed dance school in Puerto Rico. Isaac has danced professionally with Ballets de San Juan and Atlantic City Ballet. Roles with TCB include Drosselmeyer and Snow King in *A Minnesota Nutcracker*, and the Prosecutor in TCB's original ballet, Pink Floyd's *The Wall: A Rock Ballet*. Isaac received his BA in dance from Sagrado Corazon University.

Michelle Ludwig (*Sugar Plum Fairy, Lead Loon, Mrs. Silberhaus*) Michelle has danced with TCB since 2020, and also danced a season here in 2013–14. Her featured roles with TCB include the Sugar Plum

Fairy and Snow Queen in *A Minnesota Nutcracker*, Claudette in *Coppélia in Paris*, and Beauty in TCB's original *Beauty & The Beast*. Michelle has also danced locally with St. Paul Ballet and Ballet Co. Laboratory. Michelle graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of St. Thomas with B.A.s in K-12 education and Spanish, as well as a dance minor from Macalester College.

Shannon Moore (*Lady's Slipper, Viking, Party Guest*) Originally from Chaska, MN, Shannon is a Ballet Royale Minnesota alum, and was an Apprentice with TCB before dancing as a trainee with Ballet West in Salt Lake City, UT. Shannon has also performed as a guest artist with Aspen Santa Fe Ballet and Northstar Ballet. Her featured roles with TCB include Clara and Cascading Waters Lead in *A Minnesota Nutcracker*, and Prayer in *Coppélia in Paris*. This is her second season as a professional company dancer with TCB.

Lisandro Neris (*Cavalier, Viking, Party Guest*) Hailing from Puerto Rico, Lisandro trained at Escuela Especializada en Ballet Julián E. Blanco. He also trained at Centro Danza, Ballet Concierto, Feijoo Ballet School, Sarasota Ballet, Cuba Ballet, and the National Ballet Theater of Puerto Rico. He has danced professionally with the Bahbt Company, and as a trainee with Sarasota Ballet. With TCB, he has performed the roles of Cavalier in *A Minnesota Nutcracker*, the Doctor in Pink Floyd's *The Wall: A Rock Ballet*, and Francois/Franz in *Coppélia in Paris*. This is his second season with TCB.

Keara Nichols (*L'Étoile du Nord, Falling Waters Lead*) Keara is from Southern California. After starting her dance training as a competition dancer, she began studying formal ballet at the age of 13. She attended the Prix de Lausanne in 2020, and won the Grand Prix award at YAGP. In 2022, She joined Colorado Ballet's Studio Company where she danced for two years, performing in ballets such as *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Swan Lake*, *Coppélia*, and more. This is her first season with TCB.

Tyler Piwowarczyk (*Cavalier, Viking, Mr. Silberhaus*) Tyler has danced with TCB since 2021. A California native, Tyler's training includes the University of Utah, Texas Ballet Theater's Professional Division, Ballet West, Texas Ballet Theater, and Oklahoma City Ballet. He has danced with Utah Ballet, Minnesota Ballet in Duluth, Contemporary West Dance Theatre in Las Vegas and as a guest artist with Northern Plains Dance. With TCB, Tyler has danced the lead roles of Pink in TCB's acclaimed work, *The Wall: A Rock Ballet*, Cavalier in *A Minnesota Nutcracker*, and Albrecht in *Giselle*. Tyler has a BFA in Ballet from the University of Utah.

Hailey Stinchcomb (Sugar Plum Fairy, Lead Loon, Party Guest)

Hailey was born in Annapolis, Maryland, and moved to Florida at the age of 17 to continue her training at the Sarasota Ballet's Margaret Barbieri Conservatory. In 2021, she joined the Sarasota Ballet Studio Company and was promoted to Company Apprentice in 2022. During her time with The Sarasota Ballet, she had a principal role choreographed on her by company dancer Richard House, as well as performing repertoire such as *Giselle*, *Serenade*, and *Theme and Variations*. This is Hailey's first season with TCB.

David Tlaiye (Drosselmeyer) David was born in Puebla, Mexico and raised in New Orleans. He began training with Myra Mier, Alicia Alonso's niece, and then trained with and graduated from Houston Ballet School in 2004. He danced professionally with BalletMet in Columbus, OH, where he performed many featured & lead roles such as Jonathan in *Dracula*, and in James Kudelka's *Man in Black*. In 2012, David joined The Sarasota Ballet in Sarasota, FL, where he performed many ballets by George Balanchine and Frederick Ashton, one of his favorites being *Symphonic Variations*.

MaryClaire Whitley (Lady's Slipper, Lead Loon, Party Guest)

MaryClaire is from Charleston, SC. She trained with Charleston City Ballet and was a trainee with Ballet West, where she had the opportunity to perform lead roles in Ballet West Academy productions including Balanchine's *Who Cares?* MaryClaire is completing her BFA in dance performance from the University of Utah. With TCB, MaryClaire has danced the roles of Snow Queen and Flower Queen in *A Minnesota Nutcracker* and the Wife in Pink Floyd's *The Wall: A Rock Ballet*. This is her second season with TCB.

Shania Cook (Clara) Shania is from Illinois and trained at A & A Ballet. This is her first year as an apprentice with TCB.

Elisabeth Moberg (Clara) Elisabeth is from Grand Rapids, MN, and trained at Reif Performing Arts Center. She is a trainee with TCB and a student in Ballet Royale Minnesota's Professional Division.

Twin Cities Ballet Apprentices: Shania Cook, Olivia Gorgas, Joanna Heup, Merrith Skaar, Katelyn Yankovich

Twin Cities Ballet Trainee: Elisabeth Moberg



SPECIAL THANKS

Twin Cities Ballet would like to express its sincere gratitude to:

- **All of our 2024/25 Sponsors**
- **Twin Cities Ballet's Board of Directors** for their countless hours to build the foundation and growth of this non-profit organization for the arts
- Twin Cities Ballet's **Artistic Staff** for their patience and dedication to this production.
- **Ballet Royale Minnesota** for providing a home, studios, education services and storage space
- The "Friends of the Ballet" **Committee Leads: Emily McGuire (Volunteer Coordinator), Genevieve Wright (Costume/Wardrobe), Mandi Berkley (Hair & Makeup), Emily Winn & Nick Dryden (Props), Melissa Murray & Melissa White (Boutique Sales), Katie Johnson (Girl Scouts Liaison), and Tianna Votiso (Event Coordinator)** whose energy, commitment, expertise and tireless dedication to Twin Cities Ballet are helping make this organization one of Minnesota's foremost ballet companies.
- **Megan Holleran**, for the new Loon costumes and her immense sewing contributions.
- **All** the "Friends of the Ballet" and parents, grandparents, relatives, friends and volunteers who give up their nights and weekends to sew, glue, prepare flowers, organize, security lists, type, and build and fix props.
- The **Ames Center Staff and Tech Crew**
- **Girl Scouts Council, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Flowerama of Apple Valley** for their yearly support.
- **Emily Winn, Emily McGuire** and **Tianna Votiso** for their administrative support.
- And of course, **the Dancers and our Audience**, for whom Twin Cities Ballet exists!



2024/25 DONORS

Twin Cities Ballet is so grateful for our corporate sponsors and individual donors, without whom none of this would be possible. You can donate and view our complete list of donors on our website.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

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March 7-9, 2025 | Fitzgerald Theater



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