

BALLETJÖRGEN

The Nutcracker: A Canadian Tradition

MEDIA KIT

CHOREOGRAPHY Bengt Jörgen, C.M.

MUSIC Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

SET & COSTUME DESIGN Sue LePage

LIGHTING DESIGN Bonnie Beecher

NUMBER OF DANCERS 16-18 company dancers, 9-11 local young dancers (9-13 roles)

RUN TIME 2 hours with one intermission

Description

Holiday magic is made year after year by Ballet Jörgen's traditional treasure The Nutcracker: a Canadian Tradition. Created by acclaimed choreographer and Artistic Director Bengt Jörgen to Tchaikovsky's well-loved score, this delightful classic is a favourite that brings magic to the holidays.

Born from a collaboration with Kleinburg's world renowned McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and with well over 100 costumes in richly coloured fabrics, The Nutcracker, A Canadian Tradition brings out the magic of Canada. 20th Century landscapes make up the stunning 30-foot backdrops, including Franklin Carmichael's Church and Houses at Bisset (1931), Tom Thompson's Snow in the Woods (1916), and L.L. Fitzgerald's Trees and Wildflowers (1922).

This is a beautiful Canadian work, and audiences are taken on Klara's familiar, magical dream journey as she arrives in Canada and experiences winter landscapes filled with snowflakes, lumberjacks, Mounties, and creatures of the woods. This celebration of the wonder of the season is based on the popular traditional story The Nutcracker and the King of mice by E.T.A. Hoffman, enjoyed by audiences for years. The ballet's second act is remembered for its celebration of varied dances, and our charming divertissements of raccoons, loons, dragonflies, and bears demonstrate Klara's longing for the summer months as she travels excitedly through her dreams. The iconic, show-stopping pas-de-deux in the final act is lovingly danced by Lord and Lady Birch as they usher Klara safely home at the end of the adventure.

Ballet Jörgen's Nutcracker is destined to become a national treasure that will warm the hearts of young and old alike. It is a holiday tradition that has showcased the magic of the season for years. Rediscover the joy of dance with the show that audiences flock back to again and again.

Synopsis

Act I

It is Christmas Eve 1912, in the small village of Bisset, Ontario, north of Algonquin Park. The community is preparing for a holiday celebration and rare respite from every-day hard labor. People are gathering, a Christmas tree is cut and everyone heads to the school house for the festivities. Klara, a young girl recently orphaned and sent to Canada to join her older sister, arrives.

With the party already in full swing, Klara is warmly welcomed by everyone except by the daughter of the one well-to-do couple in the community, with whom Klara's sister is employed as a maid. The celebrations are interrupted by the arrival of a painter who brings handmade toys for the kids and a painting for his sweetheart, the local school teacher. Klara is left without a wooden toy, since she is an unexpected arrival but then she brings out the one heirloom from her home, a beautifully decorated Nutcracker. This immediately makes her the centre of attention. Jealous, the rich girl grabs the Nutcracker and in a fit of anger throws it into the wood stove. An inconsolable Klara stomps off, hides behind a school desk and falls asleep. As the Party comes to an end and everyone is leaving, Klara's sister is growing worried. When she cannot find her sister she rushes out together with the painter and the teacher to look for Klara.

When Klara wakes up she finds the school house deserted and growing cold. She is all alone! She notices the beautiful coat of the painter. As she puts it on, her world starts to change. Creatures of the wood are intruding; giant sized toys come alive and from the stove pops a life size Nutcracker. She is no longer alone. She has a friend! Together they have to face the attacks of King Bat and his cunning compatriots. A wild battle ensues, ebbing back and forth. Bowling pin Mounties join the fray, but it is Klara and the Nutcracker who save the day and defeat King Bat. As the walls of the school house fade away, Klara and the Nutcracker enter the beautiful snow covered forest on a sleigh drawn by white tailed deer. Out of the snow beautiful snowflakes appear, mesmerizing and blowing Klara and the Nutcracker deep into the forest. As the snow starts to fall, Klara and the Nutcracker are lost. Tired they fall asleep in the snow.

–INTERMISSION–

Act II

Klara wakes to find all the snow gone and the forest in full summer bloom. Amazed, she wakes the Nutcracker. The ice has turned to water with beavers, frogs and squirrels guiding Klara and the Nutcracker ever deeper into the forest until they come face to face with Lady and Lord Birch. Klara and the Nutcracker, explaining that they are lost, are welcomed to stay to meet some of the animals and flowers of the woods. Raccoons, loons, dragonflies, bears, flowers, a giant spruce tree and the small animals living under its branches, entertain the two guests of the forest. Finally Lord and Lady Birch sway their majestic crowns in a twirling pas de deux. Klara is exhilarated by the warm welcome and applauds them all. Bidding farewell, Klara and the Nutcracker fall asleep as they are escorted out of the forest by two bears.

When Klara wakes, she is alone, back in the school house. It was all just a dream! She runs to the window, but sees no one, as she disappointedly turns back she notices her old wooden Nutcracker on the school desk and remembers her dream — she is not alone — her new world is full of beauty — places, people and creatures to meet!

Photo Credits

The Nutcracker #1 – From left to right: Heather Lumsden-Ruegg, Momoka Matsui, Colton West & Elizabeth Gagnon; photo by Jordan Cait.

The Nutcracker #2 – Momoka Matsui & Daniel Da Silva; photo by Lance Gitter.

The Nutcracker #3 – Akari Fujiwara; photo by Kamal Daid.

The Nutcracker #4 – photo by Katherine Wong.

The Nutcracker #5 – Momoka Matsui; photo by Kamal Daid.

Testimonials

"Bravo, my favourite show yet."

– Audience Member, Guleph, ON

"A wonderful, magical show."

– Audience Member, Toronto, ON

"I was lucky enough to attend The Nutcracker and it was excellent – your dancers never fail to stun."

– Audience Member, Toronto, ON

"Canada's Ballet Jörgen combines respect for tradition with a canny eye for what will make its productions distinct."

– Michael Crabb, The Toronto Star

"Nutcracker soars... the ballet was distinguished for its imaginative choreography."

– The Brunswick, Saint John

"From the seeds of the classic ballet, grows a fresh, homemade, full-length adaptation (of the Nutcracker) that fits Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's popular score like moccasins."

– The Record, Kitchener-Waterloo

"We are excited when the Nutcracker comes to town. Thank you for a magical beginning to our holiday season."

– M. Mossberg, Tyler & Emma, Charlottetown, PE

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