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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1992

Ballet companies present classic

Audiences of all ages have been enchanted with Peter Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" since it premiered on Dec. 18, 1892. Find out where you can see this holiday classic.

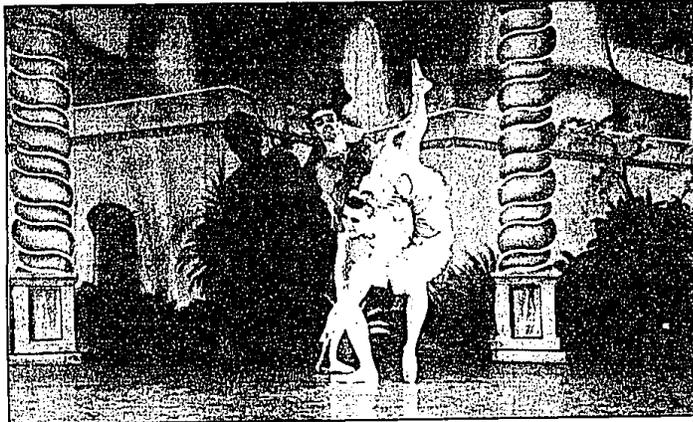


Visit the land of the Sugar Plum Fairy with Clara in Peter Tchaikovsky's beloved "The Nutcracker Ballet" celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. Michigan Ballet Theatre, Michigan Classic Ballet, and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra with Dance Detroit are among the area ballet companies presenting "The Nutcracker" this holiday season.

Michigan Ballet Theatre, based in the Farmington/Novi area, is presenting "The Nutcracker" 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 6 at South Lyon High School, 1000 North Pontiac Trail. Tickets are available at the door, and by calling 437-8105. Performances at West Bloomfield High School, 4925 Orchard Lake Road, are 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 12 and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13. All seats are reserved, call 788-1185 or 471-4180.

Michigan Classic Ballet, based in West Bloomfield, will present "The Nutcracker" at Novi's Fuerst Auditorium, 24082 Taft Road, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 12, and 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13. A special event, the Sugarplum Tea, will be offered 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4. For tickets, call Ticketmaster, 645-6666. For information, call 661-2430, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra, with Dance Detroit, Jacob Luscu of Southfield director/choreographer, is presenting 25 performances of "The Nutcracker," Dec. 10-30 at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. For tickets, call Ticketmaster 645-6666 or 396-7910.



Holiday classic: Michigan Ballet Theatre's presentation of "The Nutcracker" will feature Patricia Squire as the Sugar Plum Fairy and Leif Lorenz as her Cavalier.

Tickets are also available at the Fox Theatre Box office.

Tchaikovsky composed "The Nutcracker," his third and last ballet, in 1891-92 on a commission from the Director of St. Petersburg's Imperial Theatre, Prince Vsevolozhsky, and the celebrated choreographer Marius Petipa.

"The Nutcracker" was completed in February 1892, and received its premiere on Dec. 18, 1892.

Based on a story by E.T.A. Hoffman, "The Nutcracker" enchants audiences of all ages. A young girl, Clara, is given a nutcracker doll for Christmas. During the night, the doll comes to life to lead the toy soldiers in a battle with the house mice, led by the Mouse King.

As the Nutcracker is about to be attacked by the King, Clara strikes and kills the mouse with her slipper, and the Nutcracker turns into a prince, and invites her to accompany him to the Kingdom of Sweets as her reward.

There she is entertained by the subjects of the court, before she awakens to realize it was all a dream.

Michigan Ballet Theatre under artistic director Michelle Wolfe and Co-Artistic Director, Heather Stants, consists of a junior and major company with a membership of 35 dancers of widely divergent ages, backgrounds and abilities.

"Nutcracker" has been a mainstay of the company's repertoire since it was first performed in 1968. Herr

Drosselmeyer will be played by Dan McIntosh, oboist, and apprentice conductor with the Pontiac-Oakland Symphony. This year marks his 16th annual appearance. Clara will be performed alternately by three dancers — Kimberly Kueher, 11, Erin Webber, 12 of Orchard Lake, and Rachael Stebbins, 9 of Walled Lake. Webber recently performed in the Michigan Opera Theatre's production of "The Music Man," in the role of Amariyllis.

Patricia Squire will dance as the Sugar Plum Fairy, and Leif Lorenz as her Cavalier. Both have recently returned to the Detroit area after dancing professionally for the past 10 years in New York, as well as extensively throughout the U.S.

ON THE MARQUEE

Classic brunch

Brunch with the Classics at the Somerset Collection Rotunda, 2801 Big Beaver Road. Troy will feature "Classical Bells" noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 29. Tickets \$20 per person. Call 643-6360. Net proceeds benefit the Detroit Institute of Arts Youth and Education Programs and the Center for Creative Studies Music Education Program.

European Christmas

Cafe Cortina is offering "A European Christmas dinner" 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 2 at the restaurant, 30715 West Ten Mile, Farmington Hills. The cost is \$45 per person. Menu features seafood salad, Italian-style guinea hen, fennel sausage stuffing served with grilled polenta, Christmas Italian desserts and roasted chestnuts. Music by vocalists Pino Marelli and Lisa Agazzi, dancing. Call 474-3033.

Readers Theater

The Readers Theater of the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit will present its final program of the 1992 fall series 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 29, in the Aaron DeJoy Theater of the Maple/Droke Building, 6600 W. Maple, West Bloomfield. Tickets \$6 general admission, \$5 IRP members. Call 661-1000, ext. 345 for information.

Holiday Brass

Holiday Brass, Detroit Chamber Winds annual celebration of the holiday season, will be presented at Christ Church Cranbrook, 470 Church Road, Bloomfield Hills 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 29. Tickets are \$15, students and senior citizens \$10. Call 362-2622.

Christmas treasure

Benezer Scrooge and the Christmas Spirits return in Meadow Brook Theatre's popular production of "A Christmas Carol," which opens Nov. 25 for a six week run. Performances Tuesdays through Sundays until Jan. 3 at the theater on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester Hills. For tickets, call 370-3316 or Ticketmaster 645-6666.

Holiday appetizers

The Community Center of Farmington/Farmington Hills is offering two Holiday Appetizer Workshops, 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 1 and 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 2. The cost is \$15 per workshop. To register, call 477-8404.

Instrument sale

Farmington Public Schools' annual used instrument sale will be 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 1 in Enst Middle School Cafeteria, 25000 Middlebelt. For information, call 489-3412.

Madrigal Chorale

The Madrigal Chorale of Southfield will present a holiday program 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5 at Old St. Mary's Church, St. Antoine, Greetown, Detroit. For ticket information, call 552-9078.

'South Pacific,' 'Some Enchanted Evening'

Performances of the Birmingham Village Players production of "South Pacific" continue through Dec. 5 at the playhouse in Birmingham. For ticket information call the box office at 644-2075 anytime.

Little Rock, Ark., has certainly had an image change since Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical "South Pacific" opened on Broadway in the late 1940s.

That American musical, recently turned into an opera by Kiri Te Kanawa and Jose Carreras, is being mounted this month by the Village Players in Birmingham.

The holiday story about a cultured Frenchman Emile de Becque, and a country hick Nellie Forbush from what would become the center of city rights unrest in the 1950s is a classic

one. It is about prejudice and love in the warm climaxed south Pacific.

"Who can explain it? Who can tell you why?" sings Patrick E. Lynch as Emile in the song "Some Enchanted Evening".

Usually in the stage wings or in the audience watching his beautiful and talented wife, Mary Callaghan Lynch, in her many Gilbert & Sullivan roles for Michigan Opera Theatre, here Patrick Lynch has a chance to show off his own natural talent — a voice that will make you float away.

Lynch may make the evening enchanting with his wonderful voice, but Patty Ward as Nellie Forbush carries the action. She captures the essence of a Mizzi Gaylor personality, but does so in her own style. A great dancer, she handles Leisa Pullido's choreography expertly.

Another impressive lead was Rita Jury as Bloody Mary. Besides looking exotically Asian with her hair and make-up, Jury has the right accent. Smart, Jury keeps her solus "Bali Ha!" and "Happy Talk" in her chest range to keep an even level of sound consistent with her vocal delivery.

When he is not directly shows like last year's "Chicago" for Birmingham Village Players, Michael A. Gravame acts. This time this skillful thespian is the incorrigible Luther Billis, costing the Navy \$600,000 in damages and giving the audience lots to laugh about — wearing his boots tooth, grass skirt, and carrying a shrunken head — a rather gruesome sight.

The stage is not such a gruesome sight. The company uses movable scenery, allowing for quick scene changes. In the pit, musical director

Isabel Himelhoech leads a live orchestra, equally balanced with the singers.

One of those singers Jamie Richards as Lt. Joseph Cable shows promise. He has power especially in his upper ranges when he sings "Younger Than Springtime" and lots of dramatic qualities in "You've got to be carefully taught".

That last song carries with it the strong message that was one reason the play was awarded the 1948 Pulitzer Prize. In his acting, Richards projects the distinguishing attributes of what we think of as a Princeton grad and the same prejudices that have marked Nellie Forbush.

Lots has changed in the last 50 years since this musical was written. For one thing, Little Rock is no longer a hick town.

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