

Nutcracker - Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 - 1893)

- Tchaikovsky's famous music for *The Nutcracker* is based on Alexandre Dumas' (père) version of a story by E.T.A. Hoffman
- The *Nutcracker* was premiered at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg on December 18th, 1892. It was held as a double premier together with Tchaikovsky's last opera, *Iolanta*. The *Nutcracker* was a failure with the public and critics, and Tchaikovsky died less than a year later, not knowing what a huge international success the ballet would become.
- Tchaikovsky extracted portions of the ballet to create *The Nutcracker Suite*, which for a time became more popular than the ballet itself due to its inclusion in Walt Disney's *Fantasia* movie. Since its creation the suite has been adapted into varying version of pop, musical comedy, animated, jazz and commercial genres. The suite became instantly popular, but the ballet did not achieve its great popularity until around the mid-1960s.
- The ballet contains surprisingly advanced harmonies for the Romantic period, as well as a great deal of melodic material, which was unsurpassed in ballet music of the time.
- Tchaikovsky presents the celesta in his music, an instrument which was new to him, after having discovered it in Paris. He used it to characterize the Sugar Plum Fairy because of its "heavenly sweet sound". It was not only used during her dance, but also throughout Act II where she is present.
- Tchaikovsky also uses toy instruments during the Christmas party scene, another newly introduced instrument for that time.
- A *House of Mouse* special, *Snowed in at the House of Mouse*, included an animated short starring Mickey Mouse as the Nutcracker, Minnie Mouse as Clara, Ludwig von Drake as a character based on Herr Drosselmeyer, Goofy as the Sugar Plum Fairy and Donald Duck as the "Duck-stroke-Mouse-stroke-King-type-person" (or the Mouse King), and portrayed a brief overview of the story, narrated by John Cleese. The story ran with modern rock-style musical accompaniment.

The Nutcracker Ballet (1892)

- The ballet was choreographed by Marius Petipa (who originally presented the story to Tchaikovsky) and Lev Ivanov for the first performance of *The Nutcracker Ballet* in St. Petersburg's Maryinsky Theatre at Christmas time 1892.
- The first performance in Moscow was in 1919, performed by the Bolshoi Ballet. The little girl Clara was actually played by an adult ballerina, who also performed the Sugar Plum Fairy *pas de deux* with the Nutcracker in the second act.
- The plot revolves around a girl named Clara who dreams of a Nutcracker Prince, a fierce battle against a Mouse King and his army, and a magical land.
- Clara receives a Nutcracker as a Christmas gift, which is subsequently broken by her brother. Once the guests leave and Clara is asleep, she begins to dream of mice attacking her, and is saved by the Nutcracker Prince. He then takes her to a magical land where many different characters perform for her, all before her dream ends, and Clara awakens.

Nutcracker

Ontario Ballet Theatre (1980-)

Friday, December 4, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 5, 2009 at 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

- Founded in 1980 by Artistic Director Sarah Lockett, the Ontario Ballet Theatre's primary objective is to take the ballet to the people everywhere, to attract, introduce and educate audiences.
- Across Canada and the United States, the Ontario Ballet Theatre has reached a total audience in excess of 1,000,000 and boasts a 95% rate of return engagements.
- The Ontario Ballet Theatre's production of *The Nutcracker* has been choreographed by Professor Eugeni Yanovich Changa, former Artistic Director and choreographer of the Riga State Opera.
- The Nutcracker performances in Kingston will mark the first ever collaboration between the Ontario Ballet Theatre and the Kingston Symphony.
- The Ontario Ballet Theatre's production of *The Nutcracker* has been recreated in the grand style of the original Kirov Ballet version.
- Director and Founder of the Ontario Ballet Theatre, Sarah Lockett is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Dancing and Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing.
- Lockett trained in Canadian and British schools and performed professionally before founding the Ontario Ballet Theatre.

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