



## NUTCRACKER INFORMATION PACKET 2023

Welcome to SSPA's 35th annual Nutcracker!

We are excited to share in the joy of dance and celebrate the holiday season with you. Our production of the Nutcracker will be held at the historic Palace of Fine Arts Theatre in San Francisco this year.

Please read this document carefully, and complete the following by

**Wednesday, September 6th:**

1. Register your student(s) for Nutcracker on [Studio Director](#) – Registration opens August 1st, 2023
  - a. The performance fee will automatically be added to your account unless already included in your Company package
2. Complete and submit the [Nutcracker Contract & Conflict Calendar](#)

Thank you for your cooperation, we look forward to putting on a great show with you!

Sincerely,  
The Stapleton Team

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To participate in our Nutcracker production, a fee of **\$400.00 per student** will be posted to your Studio Director account no later than Wednesday, September 6th. Payment is due no later than Friday, September 15th. Dancers who are registered for any of our Company class packages (Ballet 2

Company-Advanced D Company) do not need to pay this fee as it is already included at a discount in their Company package.

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## **Important Dates**

Performances will be held on:

- Saturday, December 16th at 1:00pm (Green cast) & 5:00pm (Red cast)
- Sunday, December 17th at 1:00pm (Red cast) & 5:00pm (Green cast)

Mandatory Tech/Run Thrus at the Palace of Fine Arts:

Thursday, December 14th

- Green cast: 4:00pm-6:00pm
- Red cast: 6:00pm-8:00pm

Mandatory Dress rehearsals at the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre will be held on (cannot be missed) & will also serve as our DanceReach performances:

Friday, December 15th

- Green cast: 8:00am Call time, 9:00am dress
- Red cast: 11:00am Call time, 12pm dress

Auditions for the Nutcracker are *only held* for our Upper Division/Advanced Division dancers to cast leading roles. You must be turning 13 by October 15<sup>th</sup> 2023 and or entering Advanced A or B in Fall 2023 in order to take the Clara Prep classes in the summer, and to audition. To ensure equitable distribution of opportunity, these auditions are typically run by a panel of guest judges to mitigate bias. The audition schedule is as follows:

- Saturday, September 9th 1:30pm - Clara & Sugar Plum only

Casting & Rehearsal Schedules will be posted on:

- Thursday, September 14th

Rehearsals will begin on:

- Friday, September 15th

Mandatory Rehearsals for Run Thrus (these rehearsals cannot be missed):

- October 21st (Act I & Act II, both casts)
- October 28th (Act I & Act II, both casts)
- November 4th (Full Stumble Thru, both casts)
- November 11th (Full Stumble Thru, both casts)
- November 18th (Full Run Thru, both casts)
- December 2nd (Full Run Thru in Costumes, both casts)
- December 9th (Full Run Thru, both casts)

### Mandatory Meetings

Nutcracker Meetings are mandatory for PARENTS to attend, where we will review the Nutcracker Information Packet and answer questions. We offer two mandatory meetings. New & returning families may come to whichever meeting best fits their schedule. The meeting will happen in-person at the studio and on zoom.

- Wednesday, August 30th 6:00pm-7:00pm
- Thursday, August 31st 6:00pm-7:00pm

There will be a mandatory meeting for parents and dancers on **Saturday, November 11th, 2022**. We will review the details of tech/dress rehearsals, call times, and other logistics as we enter the final weeks leading up to our performances. We will hold two meetings, one for each cast. If your dancer is in both casts, please choose one meeting to attend.

- The red cast parent/dancer meeting will be held from 2:30-3:00pm
  - The green cast parent/dancer meeting will be held from 5:00-5:30pm
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### **Raffle Tickets**

Each student that registers for Nutcracker will be given 20 raffle tickets to sell. All proceeds benefit Stapleton School of the Performing Arts. The raffle tickets correspond with fabulous gift baskets containing items from local businesses.

Drawing will take place on Sunday, December 17th at the end of the 5:00pm performance at the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre. The winners will receive one basket based on their preference sheet/ticket stub. Winners may pick up their baskets at the SSPA studio, or we will deliver them. Basket values range between \$700-1,700.

Family Fun Basket: This basket has something for everyone in the family! Gift certificates to activities like rock climbing and ice skating will get the family moving. If you enjoy hanging out at home with some snacks and a good game, we've got you covered there too and so much more!

Spa Day: After getting through the hecticness of the holiday season, we all deserve a little pampering. This basket will have you feeling relaxed and rejuvenated with our facial treatments, manicure, eyebrow waxing, haircut, and massage gift certificates!

Food and Beverage: Get your appetites ready because we've got your tummies covered! This gift basket includes gift certificates to restaurants like Cucina, Taco Jane's, and Insalata's. If you want to enjoy a nice evening at home, enjoy a glass from one of the several bottles of wine included in the basket along with tasty snacks and treats.

Ballet Joy: For the ballerina in your home, this basket caters towards the older dancer with leotards, tights, pointe shoe accessories, and much more. Want to perfect your skill, take advantage of private lessons from our esteemed Stapleton instructors.

Cost breakdown:

- \$5.00 for one ticket
- \$20.00 for five tickets
- \$100.00 for twenty tickets

Acceptable payment methods include:

- Cash
- Checks made payable to 'Stapleton School of the Performing Arts'
  - NO Venmo, Paypal, Credit Cards, or Apple Pay, etc.

- Charge to Studio Director account

*\*Students must return the filled out ticket stubs for every raffle ticket sold so that we may put them in a big bowl ready for drawing on December 17th. Raffle tickets will be given to students in class early October.*

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## **SSPA Casting Philosophy**

From the office of the Artistic Director

**SSPA casting for productions** gives us an opportunity to assess, showcase, and support each student's talent and ability!

**Every student gets a role in the production** and participates in classes, rehearsals, and performances. SSPA's artistic team works very hard to create casting avenues for all students. Although individual talents and abilities are always taken into account, **our overall goal is to help all students have an immersive and positive experience!**

In producing an evening-length work, SSPA directors, choreographers, and faculty fit together the pieces of an enormous puzzle with a goal of creating the most professional and spectacular production possible. **We want to build self-esteem and provide the skills and techniques needed for success on stage.**

**Not every student is right for every role.** It's our job to look at the big picture and make sure all the pieces fit and the cast works as a whole. There are a wide variety of factors that we take into account to achieve that. The artistic team looks at past roles/experience, dedication, as well as potential growth.

**Roles are frequently double-cast** so that more students have the opportunity to take on larger roles. When this happens, each student may perform as the lead in one performance and then perform another role during the alternate performance of that show.

**Many factors are considered before these decisions are made.** In a production, we have lead roles, soloist roles, demi-soloist roles, and corps/ensemble roles. The ensemble/corps is the backbone of every production. Ensemble/corps members typically perform several different roles and have quite a bit of stage time. Ensemble/corps roles can be very challenging and as rewarding as solo roles. Sometimes they are more fun! Students can learn and grow through committing fully to the execution of ANY role. **We strive to make every child feel included and important.**

**It's natural for students to pin their hopes on one particular role,** and we recognize that when any cast list is posted there will inevitably be audible expressions of joy and at least a few tears of disappointment. We want you to know that our artistic team is trained to address disappointments – remember, as performers themselves, they have won and lost roles too!

**The role of parents/guardians in this process is invaluable.** We thank you for helping to build resilience in our students by being supportive and enthusiastic whatever the outcome may be.

Sincerely,  
*Wilhelmina Frankfort, Artistic Director*

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### **Important Notes**

- Nutcracker is open to dancers in Pre-Ballet 2 and up. **Dancers must be 6 years old on or before September 1st, 2023 in order to participate.**
- Dancers ages 6-8 taking Ballet, Musical Theater Jazz, and/or Hip Hop are eligible to perform in Nutcracker, but dancers ages 9+ must be taking the required number of Ballet classes for their level to be eligible to perform.
- Dancers will be required to miss part (or all) of two school days: Thursday December 14th & Friday, December 15th. If this is a concern, please consider opting out of the production. Excusal notes are available upon request.

- Besides the run thru/tech/dress rehearsals at the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre, all rehearsals will be held at Stapleton School of the Performing Arts on 70 Greenfield Ave in San Anselmo.
- Rehearsals are the cornerstone of successful performances. As such, it is important that all rehearsals be attended. Please email us at [info@stapletonschool.org](mailto:info@stapletonschool.org) if you anticipate a missed rehearsal. Excessive absence may result in being excused from the production with no refund.
- Injuries happen in physical training environments. If a dancer has a recurring injury that limits their participation in rehearsals and/or performances, please consider opting out. This can be a difficult decision for families to make. We are happy to assist your decision making process upon request.
- Dancers may be cast in the same role they had last year. This creates an opportunity for dancers to refine their performance skills and increase their confidence on stage.
- Eyeglasses are not worn on stage in our Nutcracker production. If your child requires eyeglasses for dancing, please arrange a meeting with Artistic Director Wilhelmina Frankfurt.

### Injuries & Replacements

Leading roles are typically cast with understudies so that those roles will be covered in the event of injury or excessive absence. If an understudy has not been cast, an alternate cast member may be asked to step in at the discretion of the Artistic Director. Dancers may not assign or select replacements themselves. Understudies should not assume they will automatically fill roles.

Injured dancers must provide a doctor's note when they are cleared to rehearse. Final decisions regarding performance will be made by the Artistic Director on or before the tech/dress rehearsal on December 16th.

### Photography and Videography Policy

Photography and videography are not permitted in classes, rehearsals, or performances. Authorized photographers and videographers that have been hired by SSPA are excused from this policy.

### Program Ads

We will send you an email with information regarding advertising in our full color Nutcracker program. Program ads help to defray the cost of printing. If you own a business, please consider advertising. Many families also like to place ads that honor their dancer. Please look for the email in early October: ADVERTISE IN THE NUTCRACKER PROGRAM! Ads must be returned to us no later than **Monday, October 16th**. Program ads do not count towards parent participation hours.

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## **Family Participation**

The success of our Nutcracker production relies on parent participation. As such, **parents are required to volunteer for a minimum of 9 hours (3 shifts)**. A comprehensive list of tasks and jobs is outlined below.

### In Lieu of Hours

We have learned over the years that a small percentage of families cannot meet this 9 hour time requirement between September and December. To accommodate families who wish to have their children in the Nutcracker but cannot meet the time requirement, we have an "in lieu of hours" alternative. Families who do not meet their full allotment of hours will be required to make a payment of \$45.00 per hour for each hour of the required time that is unfulfilled. In lieu of hours payment must be made prior to **November 1st, 2023** in order for your child to be eligible to perform. These payments are tax-deductible.

Therefore, families have four ways to fulfill the time requirement:

1. Contribute 9 hours of time to the production. (This helps us most!)
2. Designate an alternate person to put in your hours as approved by the assigned committee chair. (Possibly a grandparent, skilled babysitter 18 or older, nanny, etc.)
3. Contribute fewer hours than those required and be billed for the unfulfilled hours.
4. Prepay the total "in lieu of hours" amount (\$405.00) in advance if you know you cannot meet the time requirement.

### Parent Participation Committees

Committee assignments will be done online through Sign Up Genius. All parents who have registered their child for the Nutcracker by September 6th will receive an email with the Sign Up Genius link by **Friday, September 15th**. Parent participation committee sign ups will be available beginning **Saturday, September 16th AT 9:00 AM**. It is your responsibility to log on and sign up for a committee of your choosing. All committees will be filled on a first come, first served basis. Those that do not sign up will be billed \$405.00. **In lieu of hours**

**payment must be made prior to November 1st, 2023 in order for your child to be eligible to perform.** We do not provide financial aid for this component.

#### Parent Participation Program: Pre-Performance

**Costumes: Skilled** - Hand sewing and sewing machine skills needed. May assist at fittings, dress rehearsals, and backstage.

**Poster Distribution** - Help put up posters in store fronts, restaurants, schools, cafes, community centers, and other high traffic or child focused venues. Each volunteer is assigned a specific "territory" and asked to hang a minimum of 50 posters beginning November 1st.

**Traffic & Safety Team** - Ensure pick up and drop off of our youngest cast members. Assist at our studio on 70 Greenfield Ave on Saturday afternoons and some early evenings on Run Thru rehearsal days beginning in October.

**Ushers** - Ushers will help usher students to their seats during the DanceReach performances on Friday December 15th at the POFA.

**Raffle Baskets** - Help reaching out to local businesses in Marin and San Francisco to get donated items to include in our raffle baskets (family fun, spa, ballet, food & beverage baskets)

#### Parent Participation Program: During Tech Week and Performances at the Palace of Fine Arts

**Set/Prop Transportation** - Owners of or access to trucks is appreciated. Requires physical work. Must be able to lift over 25 pounds and be able to bend and move heavy items. This job entails loading, transporting, and unloading sets and props from our Point Richmond storage container to our studio, and to the Palace of Fine Arts and back. One trip will be made at the end of October. The second trip will be made during load-in at the Palace of Fine Arts on Thursday, December 15th (set/props will be moved from 70 Greenfield to the Palace of Fine Arts). The third trip will be made during break-down after the last performance on Sunday December 18th (set/props will be moved from the Palace of Fine Arts back to Point Richmond storage).

**Stagehands** - Assist backstage, working alongside Union crew - enjoy a unique perspective of the show! Organize and maintain props to ensure they are readily available for dancers throughout each show. Must work two full shows and wear all black. Must also attend on-site orientation at the theater, and be available to help prepare props. Some positions may include prop transportation.

**Runners** - Responsible for the movement of dancers from their dressing rooms to the stage and back. Must work 2 shows and attend tech/dress rehearsals. Runners may also be called upon as "floaters" to help with other committees as needed.

**Child supervision** - Supervise children during rehearsals, backstage, and in dressing rooms. Must work 2 shows and attend tech/dress rehearsals.

**Dressers** - Help dress the dancers during performances and keep track of costumes. Dressers may not be assigned to the same dressing room as their child. Must work two shows and attend tech/dress rehearsals.

**Makeup** - Apply makeup to dancers in their dressing rooms during performances. Must work 2 shows and attend tech/dress rehearsals. No experience needed, you will be trained. Makeup volunteers may not be assigned to the same dressing room as their child.

**Concessions** - Sell ornaments and nutcracker dolls to the public during performances. Must work 2 shows, or work one show and help with setting up the concession stand on Friday December 15th. Must be comfortable interacting with the public and lifting heavy boxes.

**Flowers** - Pick up flowers at Costco, transport flowers to the Palace of Fine Arts, assemble bouquets, cut ribbons, and distribute bouquets prior to the performances and during intermission. Must work 2 shows.