

PENNSYLVANIA BALLET

ROY KAISER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 2011-2012 SEASON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT

Marissa Montenegro, Public Relations Manager

Office: 215.587.6923

Cell: 215.873.7891

Fax: 215.551.7224

mmontenegro@paballet.org

PENNSYLVANIA BALLET AND FIRST NIAGARA PRESENT **GEORGE BALANCHINE'S THE NUTCRACKER™**

December 10 – 31 at the Academy of Music

Philadelphia, PA (November 15, 2011) – Be enchanted by the Philadelphia region's most beloved holiday tradition as Pennsylvania Ballet and First Niagara present **George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™**. An enduring production in its 43rd year, *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™* returns to the Academy of Music at Broad and Locust Streets in Philadelphia, December 10-31, 2011.

"*George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™* is a truly unique holiday experience," Artistic Director Roy Kaiser says. "The combination of world-class artistry and magical charm makes this production like no other."

For 43 years, families have created yuletide memories with Pennsylvania Ballet's production of this classic tale. The simple story of a girl, a gift, and a fanciful dream is made spectacular by opulent sets and costumes by Peter Horne and Judanna Lynn and the passion and grace of Pennsylvania Ballet dancers. Dozens of young dance students take the stage with these stars. The renowned Philadelphia Boys Choir raises their voices with the magnificent Pennsylvania Ballet Orchestra to bring Tchaikovsky's unforgettable score to life.

Adding to the excitement of this year's *Nutcracker* season, Pennsylvania Ballet precedes its Philadelphia engagement with a seven-performance **tour to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Canada**. With at least one performance already sold out, this historic tour marks the first international presentation of Pennsylvania Ballet's production of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™*. Tickets to performances in Ottawa, December 1-4, are available at www2.nac-cna.ca/en/.

This year, *Nutcracker* hits the "big" screen in **The Comcast Holiday Spectacular 2011**. Pennsylvania Ballet dancers appear in scenes from *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™* for this annual holiday show, presented on The Comcast Experience video wall – the world's largest 4mm LED video display, standing at more than 25 feet tall by 83 feet wide. See Pennsylvania Ballet dancers in The Comcast Holiday Spectacular 2011 at the top of each hour, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (except 5 p.m. on weekdays), Thanksgiving Day to New Year's Day, at the Comcast Center at 1701 JFK Blvd. in Philadelphia.

Starting at just \$20, tickets to all 22 performances of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™* at the Academy of Music are on sale now. Tickets are available online at paballet.org, by phone at 215.893.1999, and in person at the Kimmel Center Box Office.

***George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™* performances at the Academy of Music:**

- Saturday, December 10 at 11 a.m.* and 7 p.m.
- Sunday, December 11 at noon and 4 p.m.
- Friday, December 16 at 7 p.m.
- Saturday, December 17 at 11 a.m., 3 p.m., and 7 p.m.*
- Sunday, December 18 at noon and 4 p.m.*
- Thursday, December 22 at 7 p.m.*
- Friday, December 23 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- Saturday, December 24 at noon
- Monday, December 26 at noon and 4 p.m.*
- Tuesday, December 27 at 2 p.m.
- Wednesday, December 28 at 2 p.m.
- Thursday, December 29 at 2 p.m.
- Friday, December 30 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- Saturday, December 31 at noon

*Nutcracker VIP Package available at these performances (see below)

Groups of 10 or more receive great discounts and unique perks! Ask about backstage tours, special talks with staff and dancers, dining options near the theater, and holiday parties for your group. For tickets and more information, contact Group Sales Manager Arajua Backman at 215.587.6921 or abackman@paballet.org.

Make your holiday memories unforgettable with the **Nutcracker VIP Package!** Package includes:

- Preferred box seating for select performances*
- *Nutcracker* souvenir book
- Keepsake photo with the Sugarplum Fairy or Mouse King
- 10% off purchases at our lobby gift shop

To order the Nutcracker VIP Package at \$160 per person, contact Group Sales Manager Arajua Backman at 215.587.6921 or abackman@paballet.org.

Pennsylvania Ballet's Holiday Happenings

"Nutcracker Magic" Children's Party

Saturday, December 10 at 1 p.m.

Hyatt at the Bellevue and Academy of Music

Don't miss Pennsylvania Ballet's glorious holiday party, a family tradition for the past 24 years. Children will be charmed by entertainers, crafts, games, and costumed characters like the Sugarplum Fairy and the Mouse King, plus a delicious lunch, all inside the magnificent ballroom of the Hyatt at the Bellevue. Following the food and festivities, guests will enjoy a private performance of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™* at the Academy of Music at 3 p.m. This annual family party is co-chaired this year by Leigh Lingle and Tracy Wenzinger.

Nutcracker Magic guests are encouraged to bring unwrapped toys to the party that will be donated to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and all children will be invited to make a holiday card for a patient there. Tickets to Nutcracker Magic are \$150 or \$250, and sponsorship opportunities are available from \$500 to \$5,000. All sponsors receive free *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™* performance tickets to donate to the charity of their choice. For more information and tickets, contact Manager of Special Events Barbara Vogdes at 215.587.6916 or bvogdes@paballet.org, or visit paballet.org.

Tea with the Sugarplum Fairy

Sunday, December 11 or 18 at 2 p.m. (Choose the noon or 4 p.m. performance.)

Saturday, December 17 at 1 p.m. (Choose the 11 a.m. or 3 p.m. performance.)

DoubleTree by Hilton

Enjoy a performance of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™*, and meet the Sugarplum Fairy for a special tea at the DoubleTree by Hilton, just across the street from the Academy of Music! Prices start at \$77 and include your performance ticket and a delectable buffet. To order, contact Group Sales Manager Arajua Backman at 215.587.6921 or abackman@paballet.org, or visit paballet.org.

Nutcracker at Philadelphia City Institute Library

Monday, December 12 at 3:45 p.m. (After-School Program, recommended for ages 5+)

Tuesday, December 13 at 9:30 a.m. (Pre-School Program, recommended for ages 2-4)

Tuesday, December 13 at 10:15 a.m. (Mommy & Me Program, recommended for ages 0-2)

This December, the Philadelphia City Institute Library (19th & Locust Streets) offers three great, free opportunities for children to learn more about *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™*. At each event, enjoy a reading of the *Nutcracker* story with the Sugarplum Fairy. The After-School Program only will feature a special appearance by former Principal Dancer Alexei Borovik and a Land of Sweets refreshments table. Special thanks to the Philadelphia City Institute Board of Managers.

Nutcracker Family Packs

December 26-31 (except December 30 at 7 p.m.)

Save 20% with your purchase of at least four performance tickets! Plus, receive a free dessert with meal purchase at The Bellevue Food Court, located a half block from the Academy of Music. Valid in the Parquet, Balcony, and Family Circle sections. Restrictions apply. Purchase at paballet.org.

Ride SEPTA to your performance with the Independence Pass - convenient, unlimited travel on all SEPTA services for individuals or families up to five people. Purchase in advance at SEPTA.org/fares/pass.

Audio Described Performance

Saturday, December 31 at noon

For the third year in a row, Pennsylvania Ballet and Independence Starts Here! will offer Audio Description (AD) for blind or low-vision patrons at a performance of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™*. On Friday, December 31 at noon, registered AD patrons can listen to a live description of the visual elements of the production through an ear piece and small receiver. AD patrons also will receive Braille and large-print programs and are invited backstage for a pre-show "sensory seminar" with the sets, props, and costumes. AD patrons must purchase tickets and register through Group Sales Manager Arajua Backman at 215.587.6921 or abackman@paballet.org.

Give the gift of ballet this holiday season! Pennsylvania Ballet's **Children's Enchantment Fund** enables underserved families to see *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™* free of charge. One performance ticket is distributed for every \$30 tax-deductible donation. To make a donation, please call Annual Fund Manager Christina Freeman at 215.587.6913 or visit paballet.org.

2011-2012 Season subscriptions are on sale now at 215.893.1955 and at paballet.org. Choose three or four ballets and save up to 20%. Subscribers enjoy the best seats at the best prices, personalized service, lost ticket insurance, flexible ticket exchanges, a monthly payment plan, discounted parking, and more!

Connect with us! Follow Pennsylvania Ballet on **Twitter**, **Facebook**, and **YouTube** to go behind-the-scenes anytime, day or night.

George Balanchine's The Nutcracker[™] is presented by First Niagara.

The costumes and sets of Pennsylvania Ballet's new production of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*[™] were made possible by major support from The William Penn Foundation and Christa and Calvin Schmidt.

Pennsylvania Ballet's 2011-2012 Season sponsors include DoubleTree by Hilton, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Sporting Club at the Bellevue, and US Airways.

Pennsylvania Ballet receives support from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, and The Philadelphia Cultural Fund.

Founded in 1963 by Balanchine student and protégée Barbara Weisberger, **Pennsylvania Ballet** is one of the nation's leading ballet companies. Headquartered in Philadelphia, the Company's annual local season features six programs of classic favorites and new works, including the Philadelphia holiday tradition, *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*[™]. For more information, visit paballet.org or call 215.551.7000.