

Valley DANCE Theatre

THE NUTCRACKER 2025

Fri. December 19 at 7 pm

Live at

The Bankhead

December 13–21, 2025: eight public performances

Artistic Director & Choreographer

Betsy Hausburg

Assistant Director

Madison Adkins

Conductor

Don Adkins

Director Emeritus of the Valley Dance Theatre Pit Orchestra

H. Robert Williams

Scenic Design

Jim Wright

Jean Francois Revon

Lighting Design

Illia Campbell

Stage Manager

Greg Adkins

Wardrobe Supervisor

Christy Ruzicka

Additional Choreography

Kristin Ellis DelSoldato

Alana Bourguet

Heather Whitley



The Company

Guest Artist: Roberto Vega Ortiz

Artist in Residence: Alana Bourguet

Principals

Jessica Cooley
Sonia Lastochkina

Audra Edwards
Rachael Norton
Alexa Stewart

Camille Grondalski
Tatum Ryan

Company

Aarul Agarwal
Alex Foster
Helen Lieberman
Devon Price
Alex Vovenko

Anna Clark
Elizabeth Foster
Joe Mancini
Henry Rogers
Cherri Wang

Harry Dunne
Grace Heaney
Brayden Metkiff
Owen Toomey

Vera Bardoliwalla
Grace Harris
Joy Lopez
Coraline Moody-Johnson

Apprentices

Penelope Bendezu
Katie Kamena
Bani Mehta
Riya Penmethsa
Vaishnavi Srinivasan

Amaris Clark
Maya Louie
Juniper Merl
Myra Singhal

Rochelle Abrantes
Mark Belmessieri
Paige Clark
Bob Heaney
Todd Kamena
Anik Mehta
Vineet Rewari

Madison Adkins
Winter Brown
John Dooley
Liz Heaney
Elena Lastochkina
Mathew Mollica
Dave Ruzicka
Heather Whitley

Tyler Aichroth
Nigel Clark
Jennifer Foster
Margaret Kamena
Peggy McGurk
Dawnell Moody
Linda Tinney

The Story

It is Christmas Eve at the Stahlbaums' house, and the family is preparing for their annual Christmas party. The children, Clara and Fritz, are excited at the arrival of their friends and family and the grand celebration. A mysterious guest arrives who shocks Fritz, but Clara knows him to be their uncle Herr Drosselmeyer the toy maker who presents Clara with the best gift of all, the Nutcracker. Fritz grows jealous, snatches the Nutcracker from Clara, and breaks it. Clara is upset, but Herr Drosselmeyer magically repairs her treasured gift. The party picks up with dancing and celebration. As the evening grows late and the children get sleepy, the guests thank the Stahlbaums and bid farewell. Once the family is in bed, Clara sneaks downstairs to check on her Nutcracker and ends up falling asleep under the Christmas tree.

At the stroke of midnight Clara wakes up to find the Christmas tree and toys growing larger as she seems to be shrinking! Suddenly she is surrounded by an army of mice led by the Mouse King. The Nutcracker commands a group of toy soldiers into battle with the mice. The Mouse King traps the Nutcracker, but Clara comes to his rescue. She throws her slipper and hits the Mouse King in the head, allowing the Nutcracker to defeat the Mouse King. The victorious Nutcracker becomes a prince who takes Clara on a magical journey to the Land of Snow. They are welcomed by the Snow Queen, and as the snow continues to fall, snowflakes begin to dance.

Clara continues on her journey and is met by angels who escort her to the Kingdom of the Sweets. There she is greeted by the Sugar Plum Fairy, who hears Clara's story of the Prince's battle with the Mouse King and of her own bravery. The Sugar Plum Fairy rewards her with a celebration of dances of beautiful flowers and every imaginable treat. The festival concludes when everyone comes together to bid Clara farewell.

synopsis by Heidi Massie

The Nutcracker

Music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Friday, December 19, 2025, 7 pm

(cast members are listed in order of appearance)

Pre-Show Carolers from the Queen Over Jacks Quartet

Act I

Family #1	Dawnell Moody & Aarul Agarwa Zoey Schnurbusch Mackenzie Mindoro
Teenage Girl	Joy Lopez
Teenage Boy	Neil Bauman
Family #2	Cherri Wang & Matthew Mollica Myra Singhal Helena Pan Jay Clark Frankie Peppel
Grandmama	Linda Tinney
Grandpapa	John Dooley
Family #3	Liz Heaney & Anik Mehta Marlena Adkins Pierce Peppel
Teenage Boy	Noah Estep
Family #4	Jennifer Foster & Mark Belmessieri Kyla Uchytil Leo Gulec Elijah Estep
Dr. Stahlbaum	Nigel Clark
Mrs. Stahlbaum	Winter Brown
Clara	Bani Mehta
Fritz	Carson Tibbens
The Maid	Helen Lieberman
The Butler	Alex Foster
Herr Drosselmeyer	Todd Kamena
Steam Punk Niece	Juniper Merl
Harlequin Dolls	<i>Floppy</i> Amaris Clark <i>En Pointe</i> Maya Louie
Soldier Doll	Grace Harris

Mice	Madeleine Krakora Valeria Sofia Gonzalez Perez Madelyn Ellis Sophia Guajardo Isabella Classen Danica Johnson
Nutcracker	Brayden Metkiff
Mouse King	Maya Maker
Soldiers	Ellery Thissen Avalon Pedroni Nysa Singhal Hannah Estep Zoe Guajardo Islay Guajardo

Land of Snow

*Backdrops made possible by a generous donation from the Memula Family
Singers from the Queen Over Jacks Quartet*

Snow Queen	Camille Grondalski
Demi-Soloists	Maya Louie Katie Kamena
Corps	Riya Penmethsa Penelope Bendezu Sonia Lastochkina Elizabeth Foster Juniper Merl Vaishnavi Srinivasan

Intermission

Act II

Kingdom of the Sweets

*Backdrops made possible by a generous donation from the Memula Family
Halos design and creation by Cynthia Lagodzinski
Mini candy cane costume by Tanya Estep
Angels and Chinese Tea choreography by Alana Bourguet*

Angels	Danica Johnson Rosalie Chu Lily Gross Mila Rogers Naomi Farmer Ahni Gharibyan Rosy Gulec Ellabeth Fratanduono
Gold Fairy	Katie Kamena
	<i>Escort</i> Kegan Bourguet
Clara	Bani Mehta
Handmaidens	Joy Lopez Elizabeth Monteith Mackenzie Mindoro Everly Peppel Ines Hering Helena Pan <i>Mini Handmaidens</i> Charlotte Stark Kyla Uchytil

Sugar Plum Fairy	Alana Bourguet
Spanish Chocolate	Tatum Ryan & Owen Toomey
	<i>Mini Spanish</i> Wafer Wilson
Arabian Coffee	Helen Lieberman Aarul Agarwal
	<i>Mini Arabian</i> Elanor Kelley
Ribbon Candy	<i>Soloist</i> Maya Louie <i>Demi-Soloists</i> Vera Bardoliwalla Penelope Bendezu
	<i>Mini Ribbon Candy</i> Dakota Johnson
Chinese Tea	<i>Soloist</i> Grace Harris <i>Demi-Soloists</i> Amaris Clark & Riya Penmethsa
	<i>Mini Chinese</i> Nora Bendezu
Russian Cake	Brayden Metkiff Kegan Bourguet Alex Vovenko

Mother Gigogne and Her Little Buds

Choreography by Heather Whitley

Mother Gigogne	Jennifer Foster
Rosebuds	Indi Jones Leah Estep Josie Jones Nina Cartagena Julia Cartagena

Waltz of the Flowers

Floral accessories by Christy Ruzicka

Queen	Rachael Norton
Flowers	<i>Green</i> Riya Penmethsa & Jessica Cooley
	<i>Pink</i> Vera Bardoliwalla & Camille Grondalski
	<i>Blue</i> Helen Lieberman & Anna Clark
	<i>Orange</i> Grace Harris & Myra Singhal
	<i>Lilac</i> Tatum Ryan & Cherri Wang

Nutcracker Pas de Deux

Choreography by Lev Ivanov

New choreography and restaging by Betsy Hausburg

Sugar Plum Fairy	Alana Bourguet
Cavalier	Roberto Vega Ortiz

Finale

Entire Ensemble

Betsy Hausburg—Director

Upon graduating cum laude with a BA in Dance from Butler University, Betsy Hausburg got her first professional job as soloist with the Syracuse Ballet Theatre. A year later, she took a job as costumer for the Hartford Ballet Company. When directorship of the company changed, she was rehired as company member and dean of students in charge of the two-year teacher training program. Betsy married and moved to California several years later. She founded the East Bay Ballet Theatre in Albany, California, and then went on to teach for Miss Penny's in Castro Valley. There she and Penny Tomasello founded the Valley Dance Theatre in 1980. Along with directing and teaching for the Valley Dance Theatre, Betsy is the choreographer for all Livermore High School musicals and the tuba player for the Livermore-Amador Symphony.

Don Adkins—Conductor

Dr. Don Adkins has taught music in the Santa Cruz area, primarily at Cabrillo College, for more than 35 years. He has music degrees from Western Oregon State College in music education, the University of Idaho in composition, and the University of Missouri at Kansas City in orchestral conducting. Don has taught for both public schools and organizations such as the Cabrillo Youth Strings. He conducts the Cabrillo College Community Orchestra, performs as a piano accompanist, music directs for musical theater, and is the music director at his church. He was a conductor of the Livermore-Amador Symphony's summer youth orchestra for ten years, from 2016 to 2025.

Queen Over Jacks Quartet—Singers

Queen Over Jacks is a barbershop quartet, named during a performance at a poker party by an audience member! Kristen Taylor, Todd Plantenga, Steve Huskins, and Dwight Lang have enjoyed singing together for eight years, through the quartet and their association with the Devil Mountain Barbershop Chorus in Walnut Creek. They have performed at numerous public and private events throughout the East Bay, including for the U.S. Coast Guard in Alameda and as the presenters of singing valentines. They sing familiar favorites, including show tunes, gospel, do-wop, country, rock, patriotic songs, and of course Christmas music! Feel free to check them out on Facebook at facebook.com/queenoverjacksquartet.

Roberto Vega Ortiz—Guest Artist

Roberto Vega Ortiz began his dance training at Taller de Bailes LeDaph at age 14. He also studied at Escuela de Ballets de San Juan, Conservatorio de Ballet Concierto de Puerto Rico, and Escuela Especializada en Ballet Julián E. Blanco, all in his native Puerto Rico. He took summer courses at, for example, the Joffrey Ballet School and San Francisco Ballet School. In 2015, he studied at the Miami City Ballet School, and in 2016 he joined the Nashville Ballet. In 2017, he joined Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo and toured internationally, performing female soloist and principal roles on pointe. A guest dancer with various companies, Roberto was also a cast member of *The Phantom of the Opera* in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and a dancer with Diablo Ballet. He also is the co-founder, artistic director, and artist of Ballet22.

Spring REP 2026 May 23 at 7 pm and May 24 at 2 pm

In May, the Valley Dance Theatre will tell a story, well, really three stories, all to live music. First, Prokofiev's iconic *Peter and the Wolf* will delight of children of all ages. Act 1 will close with Arthur Sullivan's *Pineapple Poll*, a rousing romp of sailors and their girls and unrequited love, all with a touch of humor. Act 2 will open with Gershwin's unforgettable *An American in Paris*, featuring tapping gendarmes, the baker and his tart, and the dog walker with her poodles, plus American and French couples falling in love. *Red, White and Blue* will honor the five branches of the military and their official songs. John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" will bring Spring Rep 2026 to a stirring close.

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Student Liaisons

Betsy Hausburg—*Artistic Director (ex officio)*

Valley Dance Theatre Pit Orchestra

Conductor

Don Adkins

Violin 1

Juliana Zolynas
Ethan Ha

Concertmasters

Feliza Bourguet
Sue Ivie

Jackie Maruskin
Miki Nakamura
Anthony Westrope

Violin 2

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Caitlin Chatowski
Matthew Curtis
Audrey Horning
Nicole Targosz
Brandon Tran
Fernanda Van Atta

Cello

Claire Armstrong
Nita Cooley
Chris Jackson
Sarah Morgan

String Bass

Richard Hibbs
Navaz Jasavala

Flute

Marianne Beeler
Myra Downs
Michelle Fewx
Barbara Gunari
Nancy Lomba
Stacie Manuel
Sara Stafford
Jack Stanley
Beth Wilson

Oboe /English Horn

Tom Berkelman
Jeanne Brown
Larry George
Amy Kahn
Ron Kerst
Eva Langfeldt
Jeff Lenigan
Tim Meals
Robert Wakefield-Carl

Clarinet

Kathy Boster
Barbara Denny
Christy Diggins
Kay Leong
Robert Mayfield
Danielle Napoleon
Cyndy Salmon
Lynne Schonder
Jack Stanley

Bassoon

Katie Brunner
Helena Ellis do Amaral
Mike Garvey
Doug Stark
Adam Williams

Horn

Alexandra Baumgart
Randy Hart
Jim Hartman
Roger Henderson
Bryan Waugh

Trumpet

Steve Azevedo
Ric Beeler
Bob Bryant
Rick Fleer
Kate Hart

Melody Minto
Emma Reddy

Trombone

JT Happ
Forrest Jones
Bill McIntyre
Diane Schildbach
Mike Shannon

Tuba

Earl Pitman
Marcus Schildbach

Harp

Samantha Mulgrew

Keyboard

Angela Bu

Timpani

Eric Grothkopp
Casey Tomkins

Percussion

John Hughes
Phil Kerr

*list includes players
from all performances*

Dance Instructors

Betsy Hausburg—*Artistic Director*

Madison Adkins—*Assistant Director*

Virgil Angulo Alana Bourguet Kristin Ellis Delsoldato

Audra Edwards Meera Memula Rachael Norton Genoa Sperske

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Choreographer

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Note: If you would like your donation used to support the Kristin Reams Bettencourt Memorial Scholarship program, please make your check payable to VDT Scholarship Fund.

Valley Dance Theatre is the Tri-Valley's premier ballet company and is celebrating its 45th season during 2025-2026. Its professionally staged production of *The Nutcracker* is one of the largest productions of this ballet in the Bay Area.

Valley Dance Theatre's affiliated school offers classes in classical ballet for boys and girls ages 3 and up as well as adults.

For more information on our Company or ballet classes:

925-243-0925

valleydancetheatre.com

