

Valley  
**DANCE**  
Theatre

# THE NUTCRACKER 2025

**Sun. December 21 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

## Apprentices

Vera Bardoliwalla  
Grace Harris  
Joy Lopez  
Coraline Moody-Johnson

Penelope Bendezu  
Katie Kamena  
Bani Mehta  
Riya Penmethsa  
Vaishnavi Srinivasan

Amaris Clark  
Maya Louie  
Juniper Merl  
Myra Singhal

## Adult Division

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*

**Sunday, December 21, 2025, 7 pm**

*(cast members are listed in order of appearance)*

**Pre-Show Carolers from the Harmony Fusion Chorus**

## Act I

**Family #1**

Margaret Kamena  
& Aarul Agarwal  
Zoey Schnurbusch  
Mackenzie Mindoro

**Teenage Girl**

Maya Maker

**Family #2**

Elena Lastochkina  
& Matthew Mollica  
Everly Peppel  
Sophie Suttora  
Jay Clark  
Frankie Peppel

**Grandmama**

Linda Tinney

**Grandpapa**

Dave Ruzicka

**Family #3**

Vineet Rewari  
& Anik Mehta  
Ines Hering  
Pierce Peppel

**Teenage Boy**

Noah Estep

**Family #4**

Jennifer Foster  
& Mark Belmessieri  
Ariana Williams  
Leo Gulec

**Dr. Stahlbaum**

Nigel Clark

**Mrs. Stahlbaum**

Paige Clark

**Clara**

Brielle Pedroni

**Fritz**

Elijah Estep

**The Maid**

Grace Heaney

**The Butler**

Harry Dunne

**Herr Drosselmeyer**

Todd Kamena

**Steam Punk Niece**

Marlena Adkins

**Harlequin Dolls**

*Floppy* Elizabeth Monteith  
*En Pointe* Rachael Norton

**Soldier Doll**

Katie Kamena

<b>Mice</b>	Maiselle Adkins Eliana Thompson Indi Jones Delia Stark Josie Jones Lily Gross
<b>Nutcracker</b>	Alex Foster
<b>Mouse King</b>	Elizabeth Foster
<b>Soldiers</b>	Kyla Uchytıl Lexi Wasem Charlotte Stark Nora Fanucchi Rosy Gulec Ellabeth Fratanduono

## Land of Snow

*Backdrops made possible by a generous donation from the Memula Family  
Singers from Harmony Fusion Chorus*

<b>Snow Queen</b>	Alana Bourguet
<b>Snow King</b>	Roberto Vega Ortiz
<b>Demi-Soloists</b>	Anna Clark Grace Harris
<b>Corps</b>	Riya Penmethsa Amaris Clark Helen Leiberman Tatum Ryan Myra Singhal Vera Bardoliwalla

## 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*

<b>Angels</b>	Danica Johnson Leah Estep Valeria Sofia Gonzalez Perez Avalon Pedroni Ellery Thissen Hannah Estep Zoe Guajardo Islay Guajardo
<b>Gold Fairy</b>	Katie Kamena
	<i>Escort</i> Kegan Bourguet
<b>Clara</b>	Brielle Pedroni
<b>Handmaidens</b>	Coraline Moody-Johnson Maya Maker Mackenzie Mindoro Sophie Suttora Marlena Adkins Ariana Williams
	<i>Mini Handmaidens</i> Nysa Singhal Kyla Uchytıl

<b>Sugar Plum Fairy</b>	Rachael Norton
<b>Spanish Chocolate</b>	Elizabeth Foster & Alex Foster
	<i>Mini Spanish</i> Niamh Fratanuono
<b>Arabian Coffee</b>	Alana Bourguet Devon Price
	<i>Mini Arabian</i> Elanor Kelley
<b>Ribbon Candy</b>	<i>Soloist</i> Camille Grondalski
	<i>Demi-Soloists</i> Juniper Merl Penelope Bendezu
	<i>Mini Ribbon Candy</i> Dakota Johnson
<b>Chinese Tea</b>	<i>Soloist</i> Grace Harris
	<i>Demi-Soloists</i> Amaris Clark & Riya Penmethsa
	<i>Mini Chinese</i> Nora Bendezu
<b>Russian Cake</b>	Vera Bardoliwalla Anna Clark Joy Lopez

## **Mother Gigogne and Her Little Buds**

*Choreography by Heather Whitley*

<b>Mother Gigogne</b>	Heather Whitley
<b>Rosebuds</b>	Eliana Thompson Delia Stark Harley Berry-Polash Maiselle Adkins Ayla Thompson

## **Waltz of the Flowers**

*Floral accessories by Christy Ruzicka*

<b>Queen</b>	Alexa Stewart
<b>Flowers</b>	<i>Green</i> Riya Penmethsa & Jessica Cooley
	<i>Pink</i> Katie Kamena & Camille Grondalski
	<i>Blue</i> Helen Lieberman & Sonia Lastochkina
	<i>Orange</i> Vaishnavi Srinivasan & Bani Mehta
	<i>Lilac</i> Tatum Ryan & Cherri Wang

## **Nutcracker Pas de Deux**

*Choreography by Lev Ivanov*  
*New choreography and restaging by Betsy Hausburg*

<b>Sugar Plum Fairy</b>	Rachael Norton
<b>Cavalier</b>	Brayden Metkiff

## **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.

## **Harmony Fusion Chorus —Singers**

Harmony Fusion, an all-women's chorus, is committed to musical excellence and education, enthusiastically sharing the joy of singing four-part, a cappella harmony in the barbershop style. Members pride themselves in community involvement and strive for innovative entertainment and diversity in their membership. Harmony Fusion is proud to be a chapter of Sweet Adelines International, a worldwide organization of women singers committed to advancing the musical art form of barbershop harmony through education, performances, and competitions. Harmony Fusion has won multiple awards in SAI regional contests, including first place in their division in 2010. More information about Harmony Fusion is available at [www.harmonyfusion.org](http://www.harmonyfusion.org).

## **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.

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# 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 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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# Board of Directors 2025–2026

Jennifer Foster—*President*

Nathan Dreyfus—*Treasurer*

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Lesli Norton—*Vice Secretary*

Sandi Becker    Tory Bettencourt    Liz Heaney

Margaret Kamena    Amber Metkiff

Alex Foster

Elizabeth Foster

Camille Grondalski

Tatum Ryan

*Student Liaisons*

Betsy Hausburg—*Artistic Director (ex officio)*

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## 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

Eugene Baker

Emily Bang

Jeana Ernst

Stacy Hughes

Denise Leddon

Sophie Ma

Jacqueline McBride

Reana Pudota

### Viola

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 Loomba

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*

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## 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

# Friends of the Ballet

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Linda Tinney

## Choreographer

Sandi Becker  
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## Corps

The Dunne Family  
Peggy McGurk  
Marianne Mindoro  
The Stark Family

## Apprentices

Kathy and Dan Crawford

## Contributors

The Penmethsa Family

## Matching Grants

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Dick Hatfield and  
Sally Swanson

Directors	\$5,000+
Platinum Angels	\$1,000+
Virtuosos	\$500–\$999
Choreographers	\$250–\$499

Corps	\$100–\$249
Apprentices	\$50–\$99
Contributors	\$25–\$49

**Your tax-deductible contribution would be much appreciated.**



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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**

