

Valley DANCE Theatre

THE NUTCRACKER 2025

Sat. December 20 at 2 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

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 Penmetsa
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

Saturday, December 20, 2025, 2 pm

(cast members are listed in order of appearance)

Pre-Show Carolers from the Queen Over Jacks Quartet

Act I

Family #1	Margaret Kamena & Aarul Agarwal Zoey Schnurbusch Mackenzie Mindoro
Teenage Girl	Joy Lopez
Family #2	Cherri Wang & Matthew Mollica Everly Peppel Sophie Suttorra Jay Clark Frankie Peppel
Grandmama	Peggy McGurk
Grandpapa	John Dooley
Family #3	Liz Heaney & Anik Mehta Ines Hering Pierce Peppel
Teenage Boy	Noah Estep
Family #4	Heather Whitley & Bob Heaney Ariana Williams Leo Gulec
Dr. Stahlbaum	Nigel Clark
Mrs. Stahlbaum	Winter Brown
Clara	Juniper Merl
Fritz	Elijah Estep
The Maid	Rachael Norton
The Butler	Harry Dunne
Herr Drosselmeyer	Todd Kamena
Steam Punk Niece	Marlena Adkins
Harlequin Dolls	<i>Floppy</i> Elizabeth Monteith <i>En Pointe</i> Penelope Bendezu
Soldier Doll	Maya Louie

Mice	Maiselle Adkins Eliana Thompson Indi Jones Delia Stark Josie Jones Lily Gross
Nutcracker	Alex Foster
Mouse King	Elizabeth Foster
Soldiers	Kyla Uchytil 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 the Queen Over Jacks Quartet*

Snow Queen	Alana Bourguet
Snow King	Roberto Vega Ortiz
Demi-Soloists	Anna Clark Grace Harris
Corps	Riya Penmethsa Amaris Clark Rachael Norton 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*

Angels	Danica Johnson Leah Estep Valeria Sofia Gonzalez Perez Avalon Pedroni Ellery Thissen Hannah Estep Zoe Guajardo Islay Guajardo
Gold Fairy	Camille Grondalski
	<i>Escort</i> Devon Price
Clara	Juniper Merl
Handmaidens	Coraline Moody-Johnson Maya Maker Brielle Pedroni Sophie Suttori Marlena Adkins Ariana Williams
<i>Mini Handmaidens</i>	Nysa Singhal Kyla Uchytil

Sugar Plum Fairy	Rachael Norton
Spanish Chocolate	Grace Heaney & Alex Foster
	<i>Mini Spanish</i> Wafer Wilson
Arabian Coffee	Alana Bourguet Devon Price
	<i>Mini Arabian</i> Nora Craig
Ribbon Candy	<i>Soloist</i> Maya Louie <i>Demi-Soloists</i> Camille Grondalski Penelope Bendezu
	<i>Mini Ribbon Candy</i> Dakota Johnson
Chinese Tea	<i>Soloist</i> Katie Kamena <i>Demi-Soloists</i> Amaris Clark & Riya Penmethsa
	<i>Mini Chinese</i> Nora Bendezu
Russian Cake	Vera Bardoliwalla Anna Clark Joy Lopez

Mother Gigogne and Her Little Buds

Choreography by Heather Whitley

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

Waltz of the Flowers

Floral accessories by Christy Ruzicka

Queen	Tatum Ryan
Flowers	<i>Green</i> Riya Penmethsa & Penelope Bendezu
	<i>Pink</i> Katie Kamena & Maya Louie
	<i>Blue</i> Alexa Stewart & Sonia Lastochkina
	<i>Orange</i> Vaishnavi Srinivasan & Bani Mehta
	<i>Lilac</i> Grace Heaney & Cherri Wang

Nutcracker Pas de Deux

Choreography by Lev Ivanov

New choreography and restaging by Betsy Hausburg

Sugar Plum Fairy	Rachael Norton
Cavalier	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.

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.

Board of Directors 2025–2026

Jennifer Foster—*President*

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Margaret Kamena Amber Metkiff

Alex Foster Elizabeth Foster Camille Grondalski Tatum Ryan

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

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*

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 \$100-\$249
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Your tax-deductible contribution would be much appreciated.



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Livermore, CA 94550

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

