



The Nutcracker

Sunday, December 14, 2025 // 2:00 p.m.
Waco Hall



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The Nutcracker

Waco Symphony Orchestra

Conducted by **Beau Benson**

Music by **Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky**

Reduced orchestration by **Joseph Ceo**

Guest Conductor

Beau Benson is the Artistic Director and Conductor for the Temple Symphony Orchestra, and is currently in his thirteenth season as Music Director and Conductor for the Oregon East Symphony and Chorale in Pendleton, Oregon. After fifteen years teaching in Central Texas, he recently relocated to Malibu, California where he serves as Orchestra Conductor and Director of Instrumental Music at Pepperdine University.

Ballet Frontier of Texas

Artistic Director: **Chung-Lin Tseng**

Artistic Advisor: **Enrica Tseng**

Rehearsals Assistant: **Jaclyn Ruiz**

Choreography: **Chung-Lin Tseng and Roy Tobias**

Children Repetiteur for Fort Worth: **Linda Silva**

Children Repetiteur for Waco: **Elizabeth Villareal and Anneliese Vogl**

Head Wardrobe: **Erin Williamson**

Marketing: **Jessica Barber and Sojourn Gudorf Johnston**

Development: **Carlin Dixon**

Volunteer Coordinator: **Jennifer Cobble**

Ballet Frontier of Texas

Chung-Lin Tseng, Artistic Director Taiwan-born Chung-Lin Tseng began his artistic journey as a figure skater, winning a gold medal in pair's skating at the 1984 Taiwan National Championship. In 1990, he received a full scholarship to the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, where he trained in classical ballet and partnering. In 1992, he performed in *Hong Kong Heartbeat* in London, meeting Princess Diana.

Before moving to Texas, Tseng danced as a soloist for six years with Seoul's Universal Ballet Company, performing in 11 full-length and 19 one-act ballets across 16 countries. He created notable roles, including Von Rothbart in *Swan Lake*, Hilarion in *Giselle*, and the Korean King in *Shim Chung*.

In 1998, Tseng joined Texas Ballet Theater as a principal dancer under Benjamin Houk and Ben Stevenson. His repertoire included *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Cinderella*. He was honored with the 2000 Achievement Award from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

As a choreographer, Tseng debuted works under mentors Aaron Wan and Roy Tobias, presenting two acclaimed full-length productions in Fort Worth. In 2004, he

The Nutcracker

staged *La Sylphide* for Kaohsiung City Ballet in Taiwan. He also served as a Visiting Artist at Southern Methodist University and taught at Texas Christian University.

Since 2007, Tseng has been Ballet Teacher for Dallas Black Dance Theatre and taught Master Classes at the Star of Canaan Dance Competition in Hong Kong. As the founder and Artistic Director of Ballet Frontier of Texas, his productions, including *The Nutcracker* and *Pinocchio*, have received acclaim.

Tseng's full-length *Swan Lake* premiered in 2021, followed by *Sleeping Beauty* later that year. In 2022, he collaborated with the University of Utah on a new *Carmen* choreography. In 2024, Tseng choreographed *Romeo & Juliet* for Ballet Frontier, cementing his legacy with another masterpiece.

Enrica Guana Tseng, Artistic Advisor Ms. Tseng, originally from Chiavari, Italy, trained in classical ballet with renowned teachers, including Erik Bruhn, Yvette Chauvire', and Ekaterina Maximova. She began her career dancing with Teatro Comunale of Florence, Teatro Regio of Torino, and Teatro Nuovo of Torino. In 1990, she joined the Universal Ballet Company of Seoul under Roy Tobias, rising to Ballerina and performing leading roles such as Odette/Odile in the Marinsky Theatre's *Swan Lake*.

In 1998, Ms. Tseng became a Principal Dancer with Texas Ballet Theater, excelling in iconic roles such as Giselle, Cleopatra, Swanhilda, and Kitri under Ben Stevenson's direction. Her repertoire also included Balanchine works like *Serenade*, *Theme & Variations*, and *Rubies*. She received the "Distinguished Italian Artist in the World" award in 2006 and retired in 2008 after a celebrated career, earning the "Dancer of the Year" title from her colleagues.

In 2005, she and her husband founded Ballet Center of Fort Worth to train future dancers. Ms. Tseng has taught Master Classes at the Star of Canaan Dance Competition in Hong Kong and was named Outstanding Teacher by YAGP in 2022. She assists the Artistic Staff at Ballet Frontier, contributing to the company's success.

Jaclyn Ruiz, Rehearsals Assistant Jaclyn Ruiz moved to Houston, Texas from Fredericksburg, Virginia in 1999 to train with the Houston Ballet Academy on full scholarship. Upon graduation she was awarded the Michael Wasmund Award for her love and dedication to ballet. She joined Houston Ballet in 2001, and later joined Texas Ballet Theater in 2002 under the direction of Ben Stevenson, O.B.E. where she met and danced alongside Enrica and Chung-Lin Tseng.

During her tenure at Texas Ballet Theater, she danced many soloist roles including the third movement Pas de Deux from Ben Stevenson's *Four Last Songs*, Rosaline in *Romeo and Juliet*, Big Swans in *Swan Lake*, Summer Fairy in *Cinderella*, Fairy Beauty and Pas de Quatre in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and the lead Spanish Girl in *Don Quixote*. Some of her favorite ballets include Ben Stevenson's *Dracula* and *Peer Gynt*. She has enjoyed performing in many Balanchine works including *Serenade*, *Who Cares?*, and *Theme and Variations*, as well as Val Caniparoli's *Lambarena*.

Jaclyn retired from the stage in 2013. She is excited to be working at Ballet Frontier and to share her knowledge with the company dancers.

Key Cast Members

Kyle Baird, Drosselmeyer

Born in Kimberley, South Africa, Kyle Baird began his formal ballet training with Christine Filmater and performed in 'A Christmas Showcase' by Christine Filmater. Mr. Baird moved to Pretoria, South Africa, and continued training with Paula Olivier. In 2012, Mr. Baird received the "Outstanding Ballet Individual" award from The Paula Olivier Ballet School. From 2007-2013 Mr. Baird passed his Royal Academy of Dance exams with distinction up to the intermediate level. In 2015, Mr. Baird took part in the Aspirant Programme for Joburg Ballet under the Aspirant Coordinator Chase Bosch. Mr. Baird began dancing for Joburg Ballet professionally and worked his way up to the rank of Senior Corps de Ballet under the Artistic Directorship of Iain Macdonald. Mr. Baird trained exclusively with Thabang Mabaso during his time in Johannesburg. In 2021, Mr. Baird was accepted into Cape Town City Ballet under the leadership of Debbie Turner. During his time with Joburg Ballet, Mr. Baird has danced the roles of The Nutcracker Prince in *The Nutcracker*, Pas de Quatre in *Raymonda*, Matadors in *Don Quixote*, Cavaliers in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Chinese and Russian in *The Nutcracker*, and Toreador in *Carmen*. During his time with Cape Town City Ballet, Mr. Baird has danced the roles of Don José in *Carmen*, Lead Violin Partner in *Concerto Barocco*, White Pas de Deux in *Les Patineurs*, Dickens in *A Christmas Carol*, Peasant Pas de Deux in *Giselle*, Green Man in



Troy Game, and Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*. In 2023 Mr. Baird began working with Ballet Frontier of Texas under the directorship of Chung-Lin Tseng. During his time with Ballet Frontier, Mr. Baird has danced the roles of King Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Cavalier, Snow King, Spanish and Arabian in *The Nutcracker*, and Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*.



Key Cast Members

Kevin Dakake, Nutcracker

Kevin Dakake was born in a cave in China and raised in the city of Luo Ning until the age of thirteen, when he was adopted by his American family. He began dancing at thirteen at a local dance studio called CKDanceworks. While competing in all styles of dance, he quickly developed a deep passion for ballet, ultimately deciding to pursue it professionally. After graduating from North Cobb Christian High School in Georgia, Kevin was accepted into the Joffrey Ballet School in Dallas, Texas, where he trained for three years. In 2022, Kevin joined Zion Dance Project as a company member. His professional credits include *Newsies* and *Children of Eden* with Aurora Theatre, *The Nutcracker* with Collin Ballet Theatre, and a music video for Christian artist Victory Boyd. Kevin is thrilled to be dancing with Ballet Frontier and looks forward to the 2025-2026 season with great anticipation.



Caterina Brown, Sugar Plum Fairy

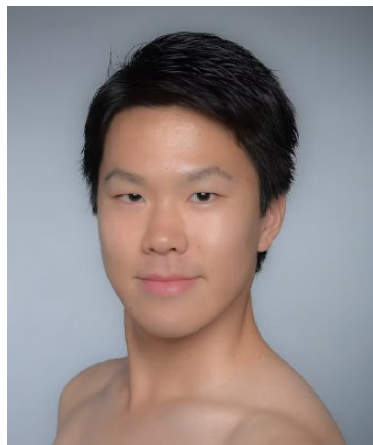
Caterina grew up in San Diego, California, where she began dancing at the age of seven. Ms. Brown trained at San Diego Civic Youth Ballet where she performed principal and soloist roles in full-length productions of *The Nutcracker*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Sleeping Beauty*. As a teen, she trained at summer intensives including School of American Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Joffrey Ballet Chicago, and IB Stage in Barcelona. In 2019 Ms. Brown joined Anaheim Ballet where she performed and toured for two seasons before accepting a trainee position with Oklahoma City Ballet. While at Oklahoma City Ballet she performed in Septime Webre's *Alice in Wonderland*, Robert Mills' *The Nutcracker*, and *The Sleeping Beauty*. Ms. Brown joined Ballet Frontier in 2022 and has performed lead and soloist roles including Moyna in *Giselle*, the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*, Carmen in Chung-Lin Tseng's *Carmen*, Princess Florine in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and Kitri in *Don Quixote*. This is Ms. Brown's fourth season with Ballet Frontier.



Key Cast Members

Masanao Ito, Cavalier

Masanao Ito was born in Ibaraki, Japan. Mr. Ito began his ballet training at Sion Ballet. Later, he attended the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School's Graduate Program on a full scholarship for two years where he performed roles in George Balanchine's *Serenade*, *Etudes*, *Don Quixote*, *La Sylphide*, and *Tribute*. Additionally, Mr. Ito was invited to perform with the Pittsburgh Ballet's main company where he danced roles in *The Nutcracker*, *Peter Pan*, *Le Corsaire*, and *Alice in Wonderland* among others. Mr. Ito participated in Japan Grand Prix 2013 and received a full scholarship to Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School Summer Intensive. Mr. Ito has also performed as a guest dancer all over Japan. Besides soloist roles, he has recently performed in Malaysia in Vladimir Issaev's *Fairy Doll*. Mr. Ito joined Ballet Frontier in the spring of 2021 and the fall of 2022.



Mr. Ito has performed principal roles with Ballet Frontier including Prince Desiree in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Don Jose in *Carmen*, the Cavalier in *The Nutcracker*, Peasant Pas de Trois in *Giselle*, and James in *La Sylphide*. Mr. Ito was promoted to Principal Dancer during the 2023-2024 Season.



Key Cast Members

Sojourn Gudorf Johnston, Snow Queen

Sojourn Gudorf Johnston is from Craftsbury, VT. She began her dance training in ballet, tap, jazz, modern, and hip-hop at age 5. In 2014, she moved to Boston to train under the direction of Alexandra Koltun and Alex Lapshin. She competed at Youth America Grand Prix, winning 3rd, 2nd, and 1st place awards in classical ballet, top 12 in contemporary, competed in the final round at the YAGP European Finals (Paris), and competed in the New York Finals. Sojourn trained during the summers with American Ballet Theatre NYC, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, and Paris Opera Ballet, and trained on merit scholarships with Bolshoi Ballet NYC, Boston Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, and Joffrey Musical Theater. She graduated from English National Ballet School's three-year Trainee Program, in 2021, receiving a Diploma in Professional Dance and an associate degree in Professional Dance from Trinity College London.

Sojourn joined the Ballet Frontier



Company in 2022 as an apprentice and was promoted to company member in 2024. With Ballet Frontier, she has performed leading roles in productions, including *Carmen*, *Don Quixote*, *Endless* by Lee Wei Chao, *Giselle*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Paquita*, *Raymonda*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, and *The Sleeping Beauty*. Her favorite role has been dancing Snow Queen in the *Nutcracker*.

JANUARY 22 // 2026
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Pianist
Aristo Sham



The Nutcracker Story

Act I

The Christmas Party

It is Christmas Eve at the Stahlbaum house, a grand house with the most beautiful tree imaginable. The Stahlbaums are hosting their annual Christmas party, welcoming the arrival of family and friends. The children, Clara and Fritz, are dancing and playing as they welcome their friends too. Suddenly mice and snow fairies enter the room, but only Clara seems to be able to see them.

The party grows festive with music and dance as Clara's godfather, Drosselmeyer, arrives. He is a skilled clock and toy maker and always full of surprises.

Drosselmeyer draws everyone's attention as he presents three life-size dolls. They are the delight of the party, each taking a turn to dance. The children begin to open gifts when Drosselmeyer presents a special gift to Clara, a beautiful Nutcracker, which mesmerizes everyone. Fritz becomes jealous and, having a bit more spunk than a boy should have, grabs the Nutcracker from Clara and promptly breaks it. Clara is heartbroken; however Drosselmeyer quickly repairs the Nutcracker with a handkerchief.

As the evening grows late, the guests depart, and the Stahlbaum family retires for the evening. Clara, worried about her beloved Nutcracker, sneaks back to the tree to check on him and falls asleep with him in her arms.

The Battle Scene

As the clock strikes midnight, magical things begin to happen. Clara begins shrinking, as her beautiful Christmas tree appears to come alive. The toys around the tree come to life while the room fills with an army of mice, led by a fierce Mouse King. As the Nutcracker awakens, he leads his army of toy soldiers into battle with the mice. The Mouse King corners the Nutcracker and battles him one-on-one. The Nutcracker seems to be no match for the Mouse King. Clara makes a final charge with the help of a Snow Fairy, throwing a slipper at the Mouse King and giving the Nutcracker the chance to defeat the Mouse King.

The Land of Snow

The Snow King and Snow Queen take Clara to begin her journey into the Land of Snow.

Act II

The Kingdom of Sweets

The Sugar Plum Fairy and the Cavalier greet Clara and the Nutcracker and everyone listens to their story. The Sugar Plum Fairy awards Clara with a crown and the celebration of dancing begins. After she is entertained by Spanish Hot Chocolate, Arabian Coffee, Chinese Tea, Russian Candy and others, Clara is offered gifts to bring back home. She leaves the scene in a beautiful Christmas ornament.

The Nutcracker Cast

Act I

Scene I: The Christmas Party

Drosselmeyer	Kyle Baird
Frau Von Stahlbaum	Jessica Barber
Herr Von Stahlbaum	Dan Westfield
Clara	Emma Parnell
Fritz	Zachary Nunn
Grandmother	Melodye Taylor
Grandfather	Michael Nunn
Maids	Louisa Hooten & Jolie Skye Roberts
Women Party Guests	Morgan Holloway, Ellenora McKie, Alexis Needle, Abigail Richards, Bennett Ross, Sadie Puckett
Men Party Guests	Kevin Dakake, David Huang, Antonio Loya, Mark Madolora, Brian Struc, Leonardo Sanchez
Columbine Doll	Caroline Baggs
Ballerina Doll	Augusta Vining
Harlequin Doll	Hanha Stephenson
Party Children	Harper Aiello, Madeline Benning, Lillian Crow, Charlotte Estrada, Davina Flaquer, Kennedy Norton, Jasper Patterson, Hanna Reid, Rylana Rodarte, Rosie Rolfsen, Riley Thomas, Anna Grace Vaughn
Rowdy Party Children	Emily Austin, Katie Nickols, Claire Perez, Neave Perez, Georgia Sutherland

Scene II: The Battle Scene

Nutcracker	Kevin Dakake
Mouse King	Dan Westfield
Baby Mice	Emma Maria Ferro, Holly Wickliff
Mice	Phoenix Burdine, Lilly Cashion, Corinne Calvin, Grace Carson, Theo Greene, Chloe Katkic, Rosalie Loya, Juneau Grundy, Olivia Ripple, Isis Sanchez, Margaret Struc, Madison Wilson
Soldiers	Lane Allman, Chloe Carlisle, Fiona Clapp, Valentina Maria Ferro, Tayley Garcia, Arden Hall, Beatrice Lopes, Caroline Mobley, Paige Philpott, Ruby Spano, Faith Trice, Savannah Wickliff

Scene III: The Land of Snow

Snow Queen	Sojourn Gudorf Johnston
Snow King	Chung Lin Tseng
Snow Fairies	Caroline Baggs, Teresa Bowden, Rilyn Braddock, Carlin Dixon, Kera Fernstrom, Kristina Gallant, Claire Locastro, Ellenora McKie, Paris Mills, Sadie Puckett, Beatrice Reyes, Abigail Richards, Adah Runyan-Randruut, Hanha Stephenson, Augusta Vining, Dylan Wills

The Nutcracker Cast

Act II

The Kingdom of Sweets

Sugar Plum Fairy	Caterina Brown
Cavalier	Masanao Ito
Angels	Hannah Achilefu, Everly Chavez, Emma Maria Ferro, Kennedy Norton, Abigail Kiger, Bebe Knas, Keira Patel, Claire Pigg, Anneliese Rudd, Aster Smith-Wright, Remy Weaver, Holly Wickliff
Lead Spanish Couple	Sojourn Gudorf Johnston & David Huang
Spanish Dancers	Corinne Calvin, Theo Greene, Morgan Holloway, Rosalie Loya, Ellenora McKie, Alexis Needl, Sadie Puckett, Olivia Ripple
Arabian Couple	Teresa Bowden & Kyle Baird
Arabian Attendants	Louisa Hooten, Jolie Skye Roberts, Paris Mills, Ashleigh Wells
Chinese Leads	Caroline Baggs, Kevin Dakake, Abigail Richards
Chinese Attendants	Eliza Cavazos, Cadwyn Cuellar, Torin Cuellar, Maggie Harkins, Piper Hochstatter, Sadie Hudson, Ella Massingill, Estelle Nissen, Mary Patterson, Carly Taylor, Danika Vande Veegaete, Hope Wickliff
Russian Couple	Kera Fernstrom & Dan Westfield
Russian Dancers	Phoenix Burdine, Grace Carson, Lilly Cashion, Juneau Grundy
Russian Corp	Amelia Harris, Lucy Jane Rolfsen, Libby Reitmeier, Carter Shearer, Lainey Hess, Antonella Maria Ferro, Greer Hall, Adeline Derry, Sadie Schroeder, Carisa Achilefu, Fernanda Parten, Ellery Biggs
Shepherdess	Augusta Vining
Wolf	Antonio Loya
Sheep	Amelia Abucejo, Chloe Katkic, Bella Silva, Margaret Struc
Gingerbread	Claire Locastron, Lylah Mills, Beatrice Reyes, Bennett Ross, Hanha Stephenson, Dylan Wills
Dewdrop	Adah Runyan-Randruut
Waltz of the Flowers	Caroline Baggs, Jessica Barber, Teresa Bowden, Rilyn Braddock, Carlin Dixon, Kera Fernstrom, Kristina Gallant, Morgan Holloway, Ellenora McKie, Gwendolyn Nguyen, Paris Mills, Madison Wilson

Waco Symphony Orchestra

Dr. Beau Benson, *Conductor*

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Martha G. Beard Chair
Doreida Aleksy Anastasiadi,
Assistant Concertmaster
Amanda Schubert
Nicole Paglialonga

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Oriana Gonzalez, *Assistant*
Principal
Alex Heidt
Sydney Ebersohl

VIOLA

Nikita Pogrebnoy, *Principal*
Megan Wright Miller,
Assistant Principal
Jann Cosart

CELLO

Jacob MacDonald, *Principal*
Holly Burton, *Acting*
Assistant Principal
Richard Engel

BASS

Rauno Meneses-Halmari,
Principal
*Janae Gaddy, *Acting*
Assistant Principal

FLUTE/PICCOLO

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Richard and Helen Ann
Shanley Chair
*Mark Andrade

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN

Clara Blood, *Acting Principal*
Doris A. DeLoach Chair
Caroline Becker

CLARINET

Ben Quarles, *Acting Principal*
Richard and Helen Ann
Shanley Chair
Talia Threadgill

BASSOON

Ann Shoemaker, *Principal*

HORN

Zach Monroe, *Principal*
David and Judy Guyer
Chair**
Kim Hagelstein
Brian Brown

TRUMPET

Wiff Rudd, *Principal*
Mark Schubert

TROMBONE

*Joshua Ho, *Acting Principal*

TIMPANI

Layci Dagley, *Principal*

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Arlo Shultis, *Principal*
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HARP

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