



Graham Lustig, Artistic Director

Inspiring the Community since 1965

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OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY ANNOUNCES FALL 2017 SEASON

GRAHAM LUSTIG'S *THE NUTCRACKER*
with live music by the Oakland Symphony
returns to the Paramount Theatre, Saturday–Sunday, December 23–24

LUNA MEXICANA
a Family-Friendly Celebration of the Day of the Dead
Friday, November 3 at the Paramount Theatre

Related *Nutcracker* events include Sweet Dreams Parties on December 23 and 24; Encore post-performance reception on December 24; and extensive outreach in schools

Luna Mexicana matinee performances also offered to thousands of schoolchildren in Oakland, Dublin, Livermore, Hayward, Pleasanton, San Leandro, Union City, and Castro Valley for free or at reduced cost

Video: [Graham Lustig's The Nutcracker](#)
Video: [Luna Mexicana](#)

Oakland, CA, September 6, 2017 – Oakland Ballet Company announces its fall 2017 performances, including two family-friendly productions choreographed by Artistic Director Graham Lustig, that showcase the company's deep engagement with audiences of all ages, and longstanding mission to make ballet inclusive and accessible to the Bay Area's diverse public. A highlight of the holiday season, the eighth annual production of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*, returns to Oakland's Paramount Theatre on Saturday, December 23 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 24 at 1pm. Oakland Ballet's *Nutcracker* has been widely praised for refreshing the holiday classic with smart choreography, clever storytelling and vibrant sets and costumes. This season marks the 46th year that Oakland Ballet has presented a production of the Nutcracker in the East Bay.

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Oakland Ballet's *Nutcracker* is achieved through numerous community collaborations. As in previous years, Tchaikovsky's iconic score is performed live by the **Oakland Symphony**, under the direction of Michael Morgan; the **Mt. Eden Women's Ensemble** joins the orchestra for the Snow Scene. Each year, the production features more than 40 young Bay Area dancers aged 7 to 17, in the roles of snowballs, mice, soldiers and candies, performing alongside the company's professionals.

Supplementing the weekend of public performances at the Paramount, the company devotes the entire month of December to community outreach, offering extensive educational programs and in-school performances to thousands of schoolchildren who might otherwise not have access to live performing arts.

Luna Mexicana

After its highly successful debut last season, Graham Lustig's *Luna Mexicana*, a family-friendly celebration of the Mexican Day of the Dead, returns to the Paramount Theatre on Friday, November 3 at 7pm. The program features a cast of five female and five male dancers, with festive choreography, vivid costumes, striking makeup and a mix of folkloric and modern Mexican music. Based on traditional Mexican Día de los Muertos celebrations, where the living honor the spirits of the dead with offerings of food, music and dance, *Luna Mexicana* tells the story of a young woman whose departed loved ones joyously dance back to life in the form of teetering skeletons, skirt-swishing girls, a high flying "deer dancer" and a rickety bride and groom duet.

The program will be presented in two acts with an intermission. Preceding the *Luna Mexicana* performance, the first half of the evening will feature a selection of Mexican contemporary and folkloric dance and music curated by Lustig. Planned performers include San Francisco's **Mariachi Mexicanísimo**, a 10-member ensemble whose musicians hail from Jalisco, Mexico; as well as other local dance and music groups to be announced. The company also pays tribute to an iconic Mexican-born figure in contemporary dance: a member of the company will perform a new restaging of **José Limón's** 13-minute solo, *Chaconne*, set to Bach's solo violin work. The music will be performed live. Festivities begin in the lobby of the Paramount at 6pm, with face painting and vendors selling Day of the Dead refreshments such as the sweet pan de muerto, tamales and horchata. Audience members of all ages are encouraged to attend in Day of the Dead costume.

Ticketed performances will also be offered at the Amador Theater in Pleasanton on Friday, October 27 at 6pm; James Logan High School Center for the Performing Arts in Union City on October 18 at 6pm; and San Leandro Performing Arts Center in San Leandro on October 24 at 6pm.

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Related Events: Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*

Several related ticketed events offer ballet audiences opportunities to interact with Oakland Ballet dancers in a festive holiday setting, and support the *Nutcracker* performances. **Sweet Dreams Parties** follow the 1pm matinee performances on Saturday, December 23, and the 1pm matinee performance on Sunday, December 24 at the Paramount Theatre, and allow children and families to meet characters from the ballet and enjoy sweets and refreshments. For adult patrons, a post-performance **Encore Reception** is planned following the Saturday, December 23 evening performance in the Mezzanine of the Paramount Theatre. The reception will include champagne, hors d'oeuvres and desserts, in the company of Oakland Ballet dancers and artistic staff.

Fall Educational Programs

Now in its 53rd Season, Oakland Ballet continues to deepen its longstanding commitment to community outreach and access, bringing its Discover Dance educational programs to more East Bay students and community members each year. As in past seasons, on-site educational performances of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* will be held in 8-10 East Bay elementary schools, in partnership with the Oakland Unified Alameda County School District.

Additionally, 2500 free tickets will be distributed to Oakland and East Bay students to attend **Production in Action**, an in-theater educational performance in conjunction with the dress rehearsal of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*. Five hundred free community outreach tickets will be distributed through the Community Access Ticket Service (CATS) organization, reaching hundreds of families, adults, and youth throughout the East Bay who may not otherwise have access to live dance and music performance.

Educational performances of *Luna Mexicana* are scheduled for East Bay schoolchildren at James Logan High School Center for the Performing Arts in Union City on October 18 at 9:30 am and 11:30 am; at Livermore High School in Livermore on October 20 at 9:15 and 10:30 am; at San Leandro Performing Arts Center in San Leandro on October 24 (times to be announced); at Chabot College's Performing Arts Center in Hayward on October 25 at 9:30 am and 11:00 am; at Castro Valley Performing Arts Center in Castro Valley on October 26 at 9:30 am and 11:00 am; at Amador Theater in Pleasanton on October 27 at 9:30 am and 11:15 am; at Dublin High School in Dublin on November 1 at 9:15 am and 10:30 am; and at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland on November 3 at 9:30 am. All matinee student performances of *Luna Mexicana* are offered free of charge to students in Oakland Title 1 area public schools; \$7 for all other students.

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Ticket Information

General admission tickets for Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* on Saturday, December 23 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 24 at 1pm, in the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, are priced from \$23-\$100, and are on sale now. Tickets for the Sweet Dreams children's parties following the 1pm matinee at the Paramount Theatre on Saturday, December 23 and the 1pm matinee on Sunday, December 24, are \$15. Tickets for the Encore champagne reception at the Paramount Theatre following the 5pm performance on Saturday, December 23, are \$25 for adults and \$15 for children 12 and under.

Tickets for *Luna Mexicana* on Friday, November 3 at 7pm in the Paramount Theatre are \$20-\$45, with discounts available for seniors, college students, and children under age 18. VIP packages are available. Silver Sponsor tickets, priced at \$100, include front balcony seating, and a post-performance Meet the Artists event at the Paramount Theatre catered by Agave Uptown restaurant. Gold Sponsor tickets, which include pre-show dinner at Agave Uptown restaurant, front balcony seating, and the post-performance Meet the Artists event, are \$200.

Tickets for all Paramount Theatre performances are available at ticketmaster.com (service fees apply) or in person at the Paramount Theatre Box Office. Tickets for the Amador Theater performance on Friday, October 27 at 6pm will be available at www.firehousearts.org. Ticketing information for performances in New Haven and San Leandro will be announced on the Oakland Ballet website when information is available this fall.

About Artistic Director Graham Lustig

Since he joined as Artistic Director in 2010, a position which became full-time in the 2016/17 season, Graham Lustig has revitalized Oakland Ballet Company and helped the organization reclaim its position as a leading San Francisco Bay Area arts institution and first-rate dance company. Lustig's stewardship has brought the company long-term vision and a reputation for nurturing community-based programming, deep audience engagement, and organizational stability. For eight seasons, Lustig has presented his critically-acclaimed production of *The Nutcracker* at Oakland's Paramount Theatre, as well as an annual spring season rooted in contemporary works, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2017); *A Cappella: Our Bodies Sing* (2016); the 50th anniversary program, *Five Decades of Dance* (2015), which won an Izzie Award; *Oakland-esque* (2014), *Diaghilev Imagery* (2013) and *Forwards!* (2011). *Luna Mexicana*, Lustig's dance celebration of the Day of the Dead, made its highly successful Oakland premiere in 2016 and promises to become a fall tradition.

In collaboration with several East Bay school districts including Oakland, Castro Valley, Dublin,

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Hayward, Livermore, New Haven (Union City), and Pleasanton, and San Leandro Unified School Districts, under Lustig's watch Oakland Ballet has expanded its educational outreach program, Discover Dance, to provide educational arts programs to more than 24 area schools annually. Educational events such as in-school assemblies, open rehearsals and student matinees reach more than 15,000 local school children each year.

Trained at the Royal Ballet School in London, Lustig danced with the Dutch National Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet before embarking on a freelance choreographic career that has included operas, ballets and musicals. He serves as a founding member of the Artists Committee of Americans for the Arts, and has served numerous times on the Dance and Policy Committee of the National Endowment for the Arts.

About Oakland Ballet Company

For more than 53 years, Oakland Ballet Company has inspired the East Bay community and beyond by keeping the art of ballet exciting, vibrant and accessible, primarily through the presentation of works of the Diaghilev repertoire and modern masterpieces. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Graham Lustig since 2010, the Company has renewed its commitment to artistic excellence with imaginative programs that seek to engage contemporary audiences—through close relationships with living choreographers, the commissioning of vibrant new works, innovative collaborations with diverse artists and communities, and compelling educational programs that cultivate the next generation of dance lovers.

A cornerstone of Oakland Ballet Company's 53-year legacy has been engagement with the community. Oakland Ballet's Discover Dance outreach program features educational programs at East Bay schools; educational in-theater performances; free performances throughout the community at events such as the Oakland Art Murmur and Oakland Dance Festival; ticket donations to season performances; and scholarships to company training programs.

Oakland Ballet's 2017-2018 season sponsors include: Chevron, The Clorox Company, US Bank, the California Arts Council, the City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program, the David and Lynn Kravis Family Foundation, Bank of America, and the Matson Foundation.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

What: Oakland Ballet Presents *Luna Mexicana: A Day of the Dead Celebration*
When: Friday, November 3 at 7pm
Where: Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA
Tickets: Tickets are \$20-\$45, with discounts available for seniors, college students, and children under age 18. Tickets are available online at www.ticketmaster.com or in person at the Paramount Theatre box office.
Description: Oakland Ballet presents *Luna Mexicana*, a family-friendly celebration of the Mexican Day of the Dead, with dancing, costumes, live music and holiday treats. For more information, visit www.oaklandballet.org.

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What: Oakland Ballet Presents Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*, with the Oakland Symphony
When: Saturday, December 23 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 24 at 1pm
Where: Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA
Tickets: Tickets are priced from \$23-\$100, with discounts available for seniors, children 12 and under, and groups of 10 or more. Tickets are available online at www.ticketmaster.com or in person at the Paramount Theatre box office.
Description: Oakland Ballet presents Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*, a beloved East Bay holiday tradition, with three magical performances featuring live music by the Oakland Symphony, this December 23–24. For more information, visit www.oaklandballet.org.

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