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**OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY PRESENTS
GRAHAM LUSTIG'S *THE NUTCRACKER*
with live music by the OAKLAND SYMPHONY
at the Paramount Theatre, Saturday–Sunday, December 22–23**

Related *Nutcracker* events include Sweet Dreams Parties on December 22 and 23; Encore post-performance reception on December 22; and extensive outreach in schools

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

Oakland, CA, November 14, 2018 – Oakland Ballet Company presents its ninth annual production of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*, returning to Oakland's magnificent Paramount Theatre on Saturday, December 22 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 23 at 1pm. Oakland Ballet's *Nutcracker* has been widely praised for refreshing the holiday classic with elegant choreography, clever storytelling and vibrant sets and costumes. This season marks the 47th year that Oakland Ballet has presented a production of the *Nutcracker* in the East Bay.

As in previous years, Tchaikovsky's iconic score is performed live by the **Oakland Symphony**, under the direction of Michael Morgan. The **Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir** joins the orchestra for the Snow Scene closing the first act. 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.

Set in Vienna in the posh Edwardian era, Lustig's version of *The Nutcracker* is based on the original story by E.T.A. Hoffmann, in which a young girl named Marie receives a nutcracker doll from her Uncle

Drosselmeyer. Overnight, her Nutcracker Prince comes to life and battles larger-than-life mice and a Rat King. In the second act, Marie and the Nutcracker Prince meet the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier in a magical land of sweets, and are treated to a series of vignettes. The production's elegant art nouveau set design as well as its imaginative costumes, are designed by Emmy and Tony award winning designer, **Zach Brown**. This year, **Seyong Kim** returns to play the role of the Nutcracker Prince for the third year, and Marie will once again be danced by **Ramona Kelley**, in her fifth year reprising the role. The Sugar Plum Fairy will be danced by **Jackie McConnell** and **Thomas Panto** will be dancing the role of her Cavalier; both dancers are returning to these roles from last season.

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 22 and Sunday, December 23 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 22 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.

Educational Programs

Now in its 54th 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 School District on December 13, 14, 17 and 18. 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* on Friday, December 21. 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.

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Ticket Information

General admission tickets for Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* on Saturday, December 22 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 23 at 1pm, in the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, are priced from \$24-97. Tickets for the Sweet Dreams children's parties following the 1pm matinees at the Paramount Theatre on Saturday, December 22 and Sunday, December 23, are \$15. Tickets for the Encore champagne reception at the Paramount Theatre following the 5pm performance on Saturday, December 22, are \$25 for adults and \$15 for children 12 and under. Tickets are on sale now, available at ticketmaster.com (service fees apply) or in person at the Paramount Theatre Box Office.

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 *Scene and Heard* (2018); *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 has become a fall tradition. This year's production included the world premiere of *Viva la Vida*, a tribute to the life and work of Frida Kahlo. *Jangala*, inspired by Kipling's *The Jungle Book* and South Indian *bharatanatyam* dance, had its West Coast premiere in March 2018.

Under Lustig's watch and in collaboration with several East Bay school districts including Oakland, Castro Valley, Dublin, Hayward, Livermore, New Haven (Union City), Pleasanton, and San Leandro Unified School Districts, 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.

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About Oakland Ballet Company

For more than 54 years, Oakland Ballet Company has inspired the East Bay community and beyond by keeping the art of ballet exciting, relevant 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 engage contemporary audiences—through close relationships with living choreographers, the commissioning of 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 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; ticket donations to season performances; and scholarships to company training programs.

Oakland Ballet's 2018/19 season sponsors include: Chevron, US Bank, the Walther and Elise Haas Fund, California Arts Council, the City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program, the City of Emeryville, Clorox Company Foundation, the David and Lynn Kravis Family Foundation, Snider and Associates, Bank of America, the Bernard Osher Foundation, Matson, Union Bank, Douglas Parking, Torres Law Group, and TMG Partners.

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

What: Oakland Ballet Presents Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*, with the Oakland Symphony

When: Saturday, December 22 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 23 at 1pm

Where: Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA

Tickets: Tickets are priced from \$24-97, 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.

Information: For more information, call (510) 893-3132, visit www.oaklandballet.org, or email info@oaklandballet.org

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 22–23. For more information, visit www.oaklandballet.org.

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