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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OAKLAND BALLET PRESENTS GRAHAM LUSTIG'S *THE NUTCRACKER*

Dec. 22-24 at the Paramount Theatre, Oakland Features Intimate Holiday Spectacle Set in Early 20th Century Viennese Splendor and Enchantment

Music Performed Live by Oakland East Bay Symphony, Conducted by Michael Morgan

Oakland, CA, August 23 2012 – A Bay Area holiday tradition happily returns to the lavish and historic Paramount Theatre in Oakland as Oakland Ballet Company takes the stage for Artistic Director Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* with live music courtesy of the Oakland East Bay Symphony, conducted by Michael Morgan, for three performances December 22-24. Mr. Lustig's version of the holiday favorite is a freshly nostalgic look at *The Nutcracker* story set in early 20th century Vienna with loving and intelligent attention to details of story and characters that received its Oakland Ballet premiere in 2010 to enthusiastic audience and critical acclaim. Finished off with plenty of bravura dancing and reverence for the perennial tale of a young girl's dreamy adventures in the Kingdom of Sweets, Lustig's *The Nutcracker* has taken its place as an eagerly anticipated Bay Area holiday tradition. Performances will be given Saturday, December 22 at 2 pm; Sunday, December 23 at 2 pm; and Monday, December 24 at 11 am at the Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway in Oakland. Sweet Dreams Parties follow the 2 pm matinees and allow children and families to meet characters from the ballet and enjoy sweets, refreshments and holiday cheer for an additional ticket price. Tickets go on sale September 1, 2012.

Oakland Ballet Artistic Director Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* brims with the kind of cheery holiday enchantment that is a requirement for the seasonal ballet, but where it truly shines is in the ebullient details and charming re-setting of the enduring tale in Vienna in the early 20th century. Zack Brown's crisp, bright sets, stylish yet delightfully modern costumes and the restrained elegance of period interiors replace gaudy bric-a-brac and engage audiences in the athleticism of the choreography and the details of the traditional story. Details that have caught the attention of media and audiences include the expansive snowball scene in the first act where Company members are joined by a storm of energetic

young snowballs careening merrily about the stage in a full-on blizzard of dancing. Lustig's production is full of smart details that delight *Nutcracker* aficionados and amuse newcomers to ballet. For this year's production, more than 100 professional dancers and ballet-trained children auditioned.

Music for the performances will be provided live by the Oakland East Bay Symphony conducted by Music Director Michael Morgan and features local choral groups: Mt. Eden High School Women's Ensemble and Pacific Boychoir Academy.

Tickets for Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* are priced \$20-\$59 with a 10% discount for a donation of a non-perishable food item (supporting the Alameda County Community Food Bank). Discounts for seniors and children 12 and under. Sweet Dreams Parties with OBC dancers and refreshments follow the 2pm Matinees and are priced at an additional \$15. Tickets go on sale September 1, and may be purchased at www.ticketmaster.com. For more information, visit www.oaklandballet.org.

In partnership with the Oakland Unified School District, on-site educational performances of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* will be delivered at ten to twelve Title I schools in December, 2012. Additionally, 1,000 tickets will be distributed to low income students to attend the dress rehearsal at the Paramount Theatre. 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 be able to experience live dance and music performance.

Oakland Ballet is proud to announce its partnerships with the following 2012-2013 corporate and foundation sponsors: Alameda County ARTSFUND, Chevron, Clorox Company Foundation, Douglas Parking, Matson Foundation, Shorenstein Properties LLC, Nestle/Dreyers Grand Ice Cream Foundation, The Safeway Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation, Scott's Seafood Grill & Bar, and Wells Fargo.

CALENDAR EDITOR PLEASE LIST:

WHAT: Oakland Ballet Presents Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* with Oakland East Bay Symphony

WHEN: Saturday, December 22 at 2 pm; Sunday, December 23 at 2 pm; and Monday, December 24 at 11 am. Sweet Dreams Parties follow the 2 pm matinees and allow children and families to meet characters from the ballet and enjoy sweets, refreshments and holiday cheer for an additional ticket price.

WHERE: Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA

COST/INF): \$20-\$59 with a 10% discount for a donation of a non-perishable food item (supporting the Alameda County Community Food Bank). Discounts for seniors and children 12 and under. Sweet Dreams Parties with OBC dancers and refreshments follow the 2pm Matinees and are priced at an additional \$15. Tickets may be purchased at www.ticketmaster.com. For more information, visit www.oaklandballet.org.

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