



# Oakland Ballet Company

*Celebrating Dance for Over 45 Years*

Graham Lustig, Artistic Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OAKLAND BALLET PRESENTS GRAHAM LUSTIG'S *THE NUTCRACKER***

***Beloved holiday season tradition returns to the East Bay for three magical performances this December***

**Dec. 21-24, 2013**

**at the Paramount Theatre, Oakland**

**Music Performed Live by Oakland East Bay Symphony, conducted by Michael Morgan**

Oakland, CA, August 6, 2013 – Oakland Ballet Company returns to the magnificent Paramount Theatre for its annual holiday season production of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*, danced to live music by the Oakland East Bay Symphony, conducted by Michael Morgan, in three performances December 21-24. Oakland Ballet celebrates a 41-year *Nutcracker* tradition in the East Bay with this fresh version of the holiday classic, conceived and choreographed by company Artistic Director Graham Lustig. Mr. Lustig sets his energetic and witty *Nutcracker* in the Viennese splendor of the early 1900s, as the enchanting story of a young girl's wintry dream unfolds through clever storytelling, thrilling choreography and vivid costumes. The production premiered in Oakland in 2010 to enthusiastic audiences and critical acclaim, and has since become a much-anticipated Bay Area holiday favorite. Performances are Saturday December 21 at 2pm; Sunday December 22 at 2pm; and Tuesday December 24 at 11am at the Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway in Oakland. Tickets, priced from \$20 to \$59.50, are available beginning August 10, 2013. "Sweet Dreams" parties follow the 2pm matinees and allow children and families to meet characters from the ballet and enjoy sweets and refreshments for an additional ticket price of \$15. For more information visit [oaklandballet.org](http://oaklandballet.org). Tickets are available through [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or in person at the Paramount Theatre box office.

Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* has been praised for its smart and stylish re-setting of the traditional holiday ballet, compelling for ballet aficionados and newcomers alike. Charming, uncluttered period sets by Zack Brown complement a production of restrained elegance that highlights Lustig's robust choreography and enhances the beguiling characters of the classic *Nutcracker* story. Young dancers figure prominently alongside members of the company, most famously appearing in Act I as a blizzard of frolicking snowballs, to the delight of children in the audience. The Oakland East Bay Symphony, conducted by Music Director Michael Morgan, performs Tchaikovsky's score live, joined by choral groups the Mt. Eden High School Women's Ensemble and the Oakland Youth Chorus.

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2201 Broadway, Suite 206 • Oakland, California 94612

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Federal tax id #94-3395450



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In partnership with the Oakland Unified School District, on-site educational performances of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* will be delivered at eight Oakland elementary schools in December 2013. Additionally, 1,200 free tickets will be distributed to Oakland and East Bay students to attend "Production in Action," Oakland Ballet's in-theater educational performance in conjunction with 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 have access to live dance and music performance.

## **ABOUT ARTISTIC DIRECTOR GRAHAM LUSTIG**

An internationally-recognized choreographer and teacher, Graham Lustig danced with the Dutch National Ballet and the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet before embarking on a freelance career as choreographer that has encompassed more than sixty works over four continents. As a young dancer Lustig was coached by Kurt Joos, Ninette de Valois, John Taras, Kenneth MacMillan, Nikolai Beriosov and Rudi van Dantzig, and worked with Galina Samsova, Eva Evdokimova and Rudolf Nureyev.

Lustig was Choreographer-in-Residence at the Washington Ballet, and served for eleven years as Artistic Director of the American Repertory Ballet, where he expanded the organization's education and outreach programs, touring the company to New York City venues such as the Joyce Theater and Symphony Space as well as nationally. In addition to ballet and contemporary dance works, Lustig has also directed and choreographed *West Side Story*, and choreographed *The Boyfriend*, *Aida*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Carmen*, *Ariodante* and *Francesca di Rimini*.

Since his appointment as Artistic Director of Oakland Ballet Company in 2010, Lustig has presented three seasons of his *Nutcracker* and two spring repertory productions, *Forwards!* (2011) and *Diaghilev Imagery* (2013), including newly-commissioned works by Sonya Delwaide, Robert Moses and Amy Seiwert. Lustig's ballet *Infinitum* was included in the West Wave Dance Festival (2011) and he initiated Oakland Ballet Company's annual summer *Ballet Boot Camp*, a two-week dance and choreography workshop now in its third year, as well as ballet technique classes held weekly on Saturdays at Oakland School for the Arts. In 2010 Lustig founded his own non-profit dance organization, Lustig Dance Theatre, encompassing a dance and wellness studio, plus a professional dance company dedicated to serving the central New Jersey community.

## **ABOUT OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY**

For nearly fifty years, Oakland Ballet Company has maintained its commitment to inspiring the East Bay community and beyond by keeping the tradition of ballet exciting, vibrant and accessible. Oakland Ballet was founded in 1965 by Ronn Guidi, and gained international recognition through its historical reconstructions of ballets from the legendary Ballets Russes of Serge Diaghilev; its mounting of classic works of Americana; and its creation of innovative contemporary choreography.

In 2000, Ronn Guidi retired and Karen Brown succeeded him as Artistic Director. Brown continued Oakland Ballet's commitment to performing great works of classical ballet, and focused especially on the work of local and contemporary choreographers. Oakland Ballet closed in 2006, but was revived in

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2007 with Guidi returning as Artistic Director. Since its rebirth, Oakland Ballet Company has brought its classic mix of drama and family classics to the Oakland and East Bay communities and continues a longstanding partnership with Michael Morgan and the Oakland East Bay Symphony.

A cornerstone of Oakland Ballet Company's legacy has been engagement with the community, including performances at community events such as Oakland Art Murmur; the company's in-theater educational program, "Production in Action"; and on-site school performances organized through a partnership with the Oakland Unified School District. In addition, through the Community Access Tickets Service, tickets are donated to community members who might not otherwise have access to the performing arts. In 2010, Oakland Ballet Company welcomed Graham Lustig as Artistic Director. Lustig's career as a dancer, artistic director and choreographer parallels Oakland Ballet's tradition of presenting historically vibrant work while championing new choreography.

Oakland Ballet is proud to announce its partnerships with the following 2013-2014 corporate and foundation sponsors: Chevron, City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program, Bank of America, America Foy LaRue, Inc., Wells Fargo, Shorenstein Properties, and Douglas Parking.

## TICKETS

Tickets for Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* go on sale August 10, 2013, and are priced \$20-\$59.50.

- Discounts of 15% are available for seniors, children 12 and under, and groups of 10 or more.
- A 10% discount is available with the donation of a non-perishable food item at the Paramount Theatre Box Office (supporting the Alameda County Community Food Bank).
- "Sweet Dreams" parties with company dancers and refreshments follow the 2pm matinees and are priced at an additional \$15.
- Tickets may be purchased at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

## VENUE INFORMATION

Oakland's Paramount Theatre, built in 1931, is a National Historic Landmark and one of the finest remaining examples of Art Deco design in the United States. The Paramount is located at 2025 Broadway between 20th and 21st streets in downtown Oakland, California, just 500 feet from the 19th Street BART Station. In addition to its own outdoor parking lot adjacent to the theater, the Paramount is surrounded by three major parking facilities.

## CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

- What:** Oakland Ballet Presents Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* with Oakland East Bay Symphony
- When:** Saturday, December 21 at 2 pm; Sunday, December 22 at 2 pm; and Tuesday, December 24 at 11 am.
- Where:** Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA
- Tickets:** Tickets are priced from \$20-\$59.50, with discounts of 15% available for seniors, children 12 and under, and groups of 10 or more. Tickets are available online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://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 East Bay Symphony, this December 21-24. For more information, visit [www.oaklandballet.org](http://www.oaklandballet.org). #####

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