



50TH ANNIVERSARY 1965-2015  
*Celebrating a Legacy of Dance Excellence*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY PRESENTS  
GRAHAM LUSTIG'S *THE NUTCRACKER*, DECEMBER 20-21  
AT THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE, WITH LIVE MUSIC BY  
THE OAKLAND EAST BAY SYMPHONY**

***Related events include the inaugural Nutcracker Ball on December 19, "Sweet Dreams" parties for children on December 20 and 21, and an evening champagne reception on December 20***

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

Oakland, CA, October 17, 2014 – Oakland Ballet Company launches its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season with its annual holiday production of **Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker***, on Saturday, December 20 at 2pm and 8pm, and Sunday, December 21 at 2pm, at the magnificent Paramount Theatre in Oakland. The production, now celebrating its fifth year, has quickly become a beloved East Bay tradition, with live music by the **Oakland East Bay Symphony**, conducted by **Michael Morgan**. Conceived and choreographed by company Artistic Director Graham Lustig, Oakland Ballet's *Nutcracker* has been praised for refreshing the holiday classic with new choreography, clever storytelling, and vivid sets and costumes, while still preserving the work's timeless appeal. Oakland Ballet also presents its inaugural **Nutcracker Ball** on Friday, December 19 at 7pm at the Bellevue Club in Oakland, a gala fundraiser to support Nutcracker performances, and featuring seasonal cocktails, appetizers, desserts, live music and an opportunity to dance with Oakland Ballet Company dancers. Holiday gifts will be available for purchase at a silent auction and at the "Nutcracker boutique."

Several related ticketed events offer ballet audiences opportunities to interact with Oakland Ballet dancers in a festive holiday setting. "Sweet Dreams" parties follow the 2pm matinee Nutcracker

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performances on Saturday and Sunday December 20 and 21 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 20 evening performance in the Mezzanine of the Paramount Theatre. The reception will include champagne, hors d’oeuvres and desserts provided by Pican Restaurant, in the company of Oakland Ballet dancers and artistic staff. For more information on any of these events, visit [oaklandballet.org](http://oaklandballet.org).

This season, Oakland Ballet Company continues a 42-year *Nutcracker* tradition in the East Bay with its fifth production of Graham Lustig’s *The Nutcracker*. Set in Vienna at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Mr. Lustig’s production follows the timeless story of a young girl’s dreamy holiday slumber, complete with dancing snowballs, battling rats, and of course, a dashing Nutcracker Prince. Tchaikovsky’s iconic score, performed live by the Oakland East Bay Symphony conducted by Music Director Michael Morgan, combines with vivid costumes and grand Art Nouveau-inspired period sets by Zack Brown to create a magical, elegant winter wonderland beguiling for ballet aficionados and newcomers alike. Young dancers from the East Bay youth ballet community feature prominently alongside professional members of the company, and local choral group the Mt. Eden Women’s Ensemble joins the symphony from the wings of the theater for the Snow Scene in Act I.

In its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, Oakland Ballet also continues its longstanding commitment to community outreach, bringing its “Discover Dance” educational outreach program to East Bay students and community members – making the art of dance accessible to thousands of East Bay residents. In partnership with the Alameda County School District, on-site educational performances of Graham Lustig’s *The Nutcracker* will be presented at 8-12 East Bay elementary schools in December 2014. Additionally, 1,500 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*. 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.

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### TICKET INFORMATION

General admission tickets for Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* on Saturday, December 20 at 2pm and 8pm, and Sunday, December 21 at 2pm, at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, are priced from \$22-\$70.50, and are on sale now. Tickets for the "Sweet Dreams" children's receptions following the 2pm matinee performances at the Paramount Theatre on Saturday, December 20 and Sunday, December 21, are \$15. Tickets for the "Encore" champagne reception at the Paramount Theatre following the Saturday, December 20 8pm performance are \$20. Tickets for all *Nutcracker* performances and related events at the Paramount Theatre are available at [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com) or in person at the Paramount Theatre Box Office.

Tickets for the Nutcracker Ball on Friday, December 19 at 7pm at the Bellevue Club start at \$100 and are available now at [www.oaklandballet.org](http://www.oaklandballet.org), by phone at 510-893-3132, or by mailing in a check to Oakland Ballet Company at 2201 Broadway, Suite 206, Oakland, CA 94612.

### 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.

The Bellevue Club, located at 525 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland CA, is housed in a historic Beaux Arts building overlooking scenic Lake Merritt.

### 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.

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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 four seasons of his *Nutcracker* and three spring repertory productions, *Forwards!* (2011), *Diaghilev Imagery* (2013), and *Oakland-esque* (2014), with a focus on commissioned works by esteemed Bay Area choreographers. 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 fifth year, as well as ongoing ballet training opportunities at The Academy at Oakland Ballet Company. 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 fifty years, Oakland Ballet Company has maintained its commitment to inspiring the East Bay community and beyond by keeping the art of ballet exciting, vibrant and accessible, mainly through the presentation of works of the Diaghilev repertoire and modern masterpieces. 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 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.

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A cornerstone of Oakland Ballet Company's legacy has been engagement with the community. OBC'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 Pride Festival; ticket donations to season performances; and scholarships to OBC training programs. In 2010, the 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's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season is supported by Chevron, the City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program, Bank of America, Clorox, the Matson Foundation, Wells Fargo, East Bay Sotheby's International, the Alameda County Arts Commission/ARTSFUND Grants and McGuire and Hester.

**CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

- What:** Oakland Ballet Presents Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* with the Oakland East Bay Symphony
- When:** Saturday, December 20 at 2pm and 8pm, and Sunday, December 21 at 2pm
- Where:** Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA
- Tickets:** Tickets are priced from \$22-\$70.50, 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 20-21. For more information, visit [www.oaklandballet.org](http://www.oaklandballet.org).

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- What:** Oakland Ballet Company's Nutcracker Ball
- When:** Friday, December 19 at 7pm
- Where:** The Bellevue Club, 525 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland CA
- Tickets:** Tickets start at \$100 and are available at [www.oaklandballet.org](http://www.oaklandballet.org), by phone at 510-893-3132, or by mailing in a check to Oakland Ballet Company at 2201 Broadway, Suite 206, Oakland, CA 94612
- Description:** Oakland Ballet Company presents its inaugural Nutcracker Ball, a gala fundraising event featuring refreshments and entertainment, with proceeds supporting the 2014 production of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*.

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