



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 19-20 AT THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE
WITH LIVE MUSIC BY THE OAKLAND SYMPHONY**

Related events include the Land of the Sweets Tea Party on December 12, "Sweet Dreams" parties for children on December 19 and 20, an evening champagne reception on December 19, and extensive outreach and educational activities for East Bay schoolchildren

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

Oakland, CA, September 10, 2015 – Oakland Ballet Company continues a beloved holiday tradition, with its sixth annual production of **Graham Lustig's The Nutcracker**, on Saturday, December 19 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 20 at 2pm, in the magnificent Paramount Theatre in Oakland. The production, conceived and choreographed by Artistic Director Graham Lustig, has been widely praised for refreshing the holiday classic with sparkling new choreography, witty storytelling and vivid sets and costumes. As the *Huffington Post* observes, "Lustig administers a series of tiny astonishments: comic touches, ironic twists to tradition, moments that reveal character or render the music in jewel-like images." Truly a production of, for, and by the community it serves, Oakland Ballet's *Nutcracker* features more than 40 young student dancers aged 7 to 17, in the roles of adorable snowballs, mice, soldiers and candies, performing alongside the company's acclaimed professionals. Tchaikovsky's unforgettable score is performed live by the **Oakland Symphony**, under the direction of maestro **Michael Morgan**. In addition, local choral group the **Mt. Eden Women's Ensemble**, singing from the wings of the theater, adds its vocal talent to the ballet's magical Snow Scene. In addition to the weekend of 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.

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Several related ticketed events offer ballet audiences opportunities to interact with Oakland Ballet dancers in a festive holiday setting, and support the *Nutcracker* performances. The company hosts a **Land of the Sweets Tea Party** on Saturday, December 12 from 1pm to 4:30pm at the Bellevue Club in Oakland, a “high tea” fundraiser featuring finger sandwiches, treats, teas and champagne, as well as *Nutcracker* performance excerpts, live music, and holiday carols. Holiday gifts will also be available for purchase at the *Nutcracker* boutique.

“Sweet Dreams” parties follow the 1pm matinee *Nutcracker* performances on Saturday, December 19, and the 2pm performance on Sunday, December 20 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 19 evening performance in the Mezzanine of the Paramount Theatre. The reception will include champagne, hors d’oeuvres and desserts provided by local dining establishments, in the company of Oakland Ballet dancers and artistic staff. For more information on any of these events, visit oaklandballet.org.

Oakland Ballet Company continues a 43-year *Nutcracker* tradition in the East Bay with its sixth production of *Graham Lustig’s The Nutcracker*. Mr. Lustig’s production, set in Vienna at the turn of the 20th Century, retells the classic ballet with elegant costumes, witty choreography and charming storytelling. Grand and vivid sets by Zack Brown set the scene for a young girl’s wintry dream – complete with dancing snowballs, battling rats, and a dashing *Nutcracker* Prince. Tchaikovsky’s lush score is performed live by the Oakland Symphony conducted by Michael Morgan.

Now concluding its 50th Anniversary Season, Oakland Ballet deepens its longstanding commitment to community outreach and access, bringing its “Discover Dance” educational program to more East Bay students and community members than ever before. This season, “Discover Dance” expands to Hayward in partnership with Chabot College, offering educational performances for up to 3,000 students in the Hayward Unified School District on November 30 and December 1 at the Reed L. Buffington Performing Arts Center at Chabot College. As in past seasons, on-site educational performances of *Graham Lustig’s The Nutcracker* will also be held in nearly a dozen East Bay elementary schools, in partnership with the Alameda County School District.

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Additionally, 1,700 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.

TICKET INFORMATION

General admission tickets for ***Graham Lustig’s The Nutcracker*** on Saturday, December 19 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 20 at 2pm, in the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, are priced from \$23.00–\$85.00, and go on sale September 15. Tickets for the “Sweet Dreams” children’s parties following the 1pm matinee at the Paramount Theatre on Saturday, December 19 and the 2 pm matinee on Sunday, December 21, are \$15. Tickets for the “Encore” champagne reception at the Paramount Theatre following the 5pm performance on Saturday, December 19, are \$20. Tickets for all *Nutcracker* performances and related events at the Paramount Theatre will be available at ticketmaster.com or in person at the Paramount Theatre Box Office beginning September 15.

Tickets for the **Land of the Sweets Tea Party** on Saturday, December 12 at 1pm at the Bellevue Club start at \$85, with discounts for children, and will be available beginning October 1, at www.oaklandballet.org, by phone at 510-893-3132, or by mailing 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.

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ABOUT ARTISTIC DIRECTOR GRAHAM LUSTIG

An internationally recognized choreographer and director, Graham Lustig danced as a soloist 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 seventy works over four continents. 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 national venues including New York City stages such as the Joyce Theater and Symphony Space. In addition to ballet and contemporary dance works, Lustig has directed and choreographed *West Side Story*, and choreographed *The Boyfriend*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Aida*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Carmen*, *Ariodante* and *Francesca di Rimini*.

Since his appointment as Artistic Director of Oakland Ballet Company in 2010, Lustig has presented five seasons of his *Nutcracker* and four spring repertory productions, with a focus on commissioned works by esteemed Bay Area choreographers: *Forwards!* (2011), *Diaghilev Imagery* (2013), *Oakland-esque* (2014) and the 50th Anniversary Season, *Five Decades of Dance* (2015). 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 three-week dance and choreography workshop now in its sixth year, as well as ongoing ballet training opportunities at The Academy at Oakland Ballet Company.

ABOUT OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY

For fifty 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.

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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. Since then, Oakland Ballet Company has brought its mix of contemporary and classic programs to the Oakland and East Bay communities and continued its longstanding partnership with Michael Morgan and the Oakland Symphony.

A cornerstone of Oakland Ballet Company's 50-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 Murrum and Oakland Dance Festival; ticket donations to season performances; and scholarships to OBC training programs.

Oakland Ballet's 2015-2016 Season sponsors include Chevron, the City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program, Clorox, Bank of America and the Matson Foundation.

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

- What:** Oakland Ballet Presents *Graham Lustig's The Nutcracker*, with the Oakland Symphony
- When:** Saturday, December 19 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 20 at 2pm
- Where:** Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA
- Tickets:** Tickets are priced from \$23.00-\$85.00, with discounts of 10% 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 19-20. For more information, visit www.oaklandballet.org.

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- What:** Oakland Ballet Company's Land of the Sweets Tea Party
- When:** Saturday, December 12 at 1pm
- Where:** The Bellevue Club, 525 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland CA
- Tickets:** Tickets start at \$85, with discounts for children, and will be available on October 1 at 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 the **Land of the Sweets Tea Party**, an elegant "high tea" featuring refreshments, *Nutcracker* ballet excerpts, live music, and holiday carols, with proceeds supporting the 2015 production of *Graham Lustig's The Nutcracker*.

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