

# Holiday Dance Gets Audiences Into The Spirit

## With Christmas right around the corner, local dance companies come bearing a variety of holiday offerings to help get you into the Christmas spirit.

From December 20 through 22, Festival Ballet Providence moves into PPAC for their annual production of *The Nutcracker*. Composed by Tchaikovsky in 1891, it is the most performed ballet in the world, making its American debut in 1944 with San Francisco Ballet. Since then, it has become a holiday staple with its charming storyline and recognizable music bringing joy to young and old alike.

With stunning choreography, majestic sets, colorful costumes and sparkling Swarovski crystal snowflakes, this marks FBP artistic director Mihailo Djuric's 16<sup>th</sup> *Nutcracker*; the company is currently in the midst of their 36<sup>th</sup> season. Djuric refers to this performance as FBP's "annual gift to the city of Providence."

It is even more special - and memorable - for the 100 plus children selected from area dance schools who share the stage with the company's professional dancers. In addition, two students from FBP's Adaptive Dance Program, Sean Muldoon and Alyzabeth Bertrand, will appear in the Act I party scene. This groundbreaking program introduces children with Down Syndrome to dance.

Amazing RI native Jennifer Ricci, now in her 23<sup>rd</sup> season, will once again reprise her most famous role, Arabian. Each year audiences are mesmerized by her seductive stare, ethereal grace and flexibility. Featuring two casts, Vilia Putrius and Mindaugas Bauzys and Ruth Witney Brown and Alan Alberto will share the lead roles of Sugar Plum Fairy and Her Cavalier. The two couples will also split Snow Queen and Snow King duties during alternating performances.

FBP Center for Dance Education students Jane Schiavone and Lan Pricolo have both earned the honor of portraying Clara, the most coveted role of any young ballerina.

And, be sure not to miss RI's most famous non-human performer, Archie the Nutcracker Dog as he dashes across the stage during the Prelude. Friday's opening night performance will represent the 115<sup>th</sup> time he dons his red Santa suit covered with bells.

For tickets to FBP's *The Nutcracker* visit: [www.ppacri.org](http://www.ppacri.org) or call 401-421-ARTS.

Now in their 54<sup>th</sup> season, The State Ballet of Rhode Island will present their traditional holiday production of *Coppelia* December 20 through 21 at Rhode Island College's Roberts Hall.

This ballet tells the heartwarming story of Swanhilda, a girl who pretends to be a doll in order to win back the affection of her boyfriend Franz. Set to the energetic music of Leo Delibes, this fun and playful

ballet nicely captures the gaiety of European folk dance with a very lively and colorful Czardas and Mazurka.

In a break from past performances, Act III will actually include the wedding between Swanhilda and Franz. For the past 30 years or so, SBRI chose to begin Act III with the wedding already a done deal. But, according to executive director Ana Marsden Fox, in recognition of the winter solstice that will be occurring during the performance “a wedding there will be. To top it off, you may even see a snowflake or two, really getting the audience into that holiday wintery spirit.”

*Coppelia* will also use two casts. Peg Chobanian and Mark Marsden will dance the lead roles opening night. Kim Najjar and guest artist Eivar Martinez will have the honors for the Saturday matinee. Martinez, a native of Venezuela, currently resides in Providence and brings with him an impressive dance resume, known especially for his gravity defying leaps.

For tickets to SBRI's *Coppelia* visit: [www.stateballet.com](http://www.stateballet.com).

For those looking to get an early start on the holiday performances, consider Providence Ballet Theatre's *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* December 13 at Rhode Island College's The Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts. Set to Samuel Clement Moore's classic poem, this is a fun and edgy ballet with colorful costumes, dreamlike choreography, moving sets and falling snow, all which make for a magical holiday event. Previous performances have sold-out, so plan accordingly.

Founded in 2008 by Eva Maria Pacheco, a very familiar and accomplished name within RI dance circles, the not-for-profit PBT continues to grow and leave its mark on the local dance community. In the spring of 2014, Ms. Pacheco will partner with winners of RISD's prestigious Robert Turner Theatrical and Performance Dance Project to present the premier of her new ballet *The Magic Box*.

For tickets to PBT's *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* visit: [www.providenceballet.org](http://www.providenceballet.org).