



For Immediate Release:
OIBA's "Charming" *Nutcracker*
Comes to Life at the Reser Center!

"Young stars shine at Oregon International Ballet Academy... (in) a fully produced Nutcracker, with charming sets and costumes... engaged my jaded attention from the first excited jumps...to the elaborate wrapup "
- Oregon ArtsWatch

PORTLAND, OR (November 10, 2022): Following multiple years on hiatus due to the pandemic, Oregon International Ballet Academy revives its highly acclaimed *Nutcracker* production, bringing two performances to the Patricia Reser Center for the Arts in Beaverton! OIBA's *Nutcracker* offers a unique and seamless integration of charming and joyful performances by student dancers with stunning appearances from the school's top performers and surprise guest artists. The result is a high-quality, cohesive, and exhilarating experience that delivers a heaping portion of holiday magic!

Oregon International Ballet Academy presents
The Nutcracker

Music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky,

Choreography by Xuan Cheng / Ye Li after Marius Petipa / Lev Ivanov

WHEN: Saturday, Dec. 10, 7pm & Sunday, Dec. 11, 2pm
(runtime: 150 minutes which includes one intermission)

WHERE: Patricia Reser Center for the Arts

TICKETS: \$28-33 at <https://www.oiballet.org/events>



OIBA Nutcracker, 2018

OIBA Directors are dedicated to providing their students with opportunities for global learning and cultural exchange, both at home and through travel. This year's *Nutcracker* production brings exciting guest artists from Los Angeles and Japan to Portland, providing OIBA students with an enriching collaborative experience. Student dancers from Casa de Arte, a celebrated dance and performance studio in Kumamoto, Japan, will dance side-by-side with OIBA students, and young Japanese star Tango Hayato Fujita-Gomez will dance the role of the Nutcracker prince.

With original choreography co-created specifically for OIBA students by Artistic and Executive Director husband and wife team, Xuan Cheng and Ye Li, these young dancers experience not only the joy of professional performance, but also the personal growth associated with the creative process. Many students perform multiple roles in the show with most performing different roles in each performance. A number of parents also participate as party guests, forming memories of dancing with their children onstage they will cherish all their lives.

"With our star teachers guiding these students in top-notch training, and choreography uniquely adapted to our student body, our young dancers blossom in these beloved holiday roles. Strong and secure training allows an ease of technique so that their personalities really come through onstage... which puts a fresh and fun twist on classic characters! We're thrilled to bring this production to the beautiful new Reser Center." - OIBA Artistic Director Xuan Cheng



Many of OIBA's top dancers who have been with the company since its first sold-out Nutcracker in 2018, dancing each and every character through the years, are now graduating into starring roles! For example, Emily Song (pictured in pink in performance photos right throughout the years) will dance the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy (in pink costume, photo above) in the Sunday, December 11th performance at the impressive age of 16.



Oregon International Ballet Academy

Through excellence in ballet instruction and uniquely nurturing mentorship, OIBA teachers instill beauty, confidence, health, love and responsibility, inspiring students to fulfill their dreams. At once a world class institution and a warm international family, OIBA has produced original, professional performances with live music every year since its founding, including classical ballet and contemporary work. The experiences and connections of Directors Xuan Cheng and Ye Li provide students with a platform to perform on stages around the world, allowing each dancer an opportunity to explore a similar journey of their own happiness onstage. Since the school founded in 2015, OIBA trained students have won positions in The School of American Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Ballet West Academy, Kirov Academy of Ballet, and The School of Pacific Northwest Ballet School. Learn more and read director biographies at oiballet.org.

Xuan Cheng - Artistic Director, Oregon International Ballet Academy

As a ballerina, teacher, director, and dance world visionary, Xuan Cheng shares the immense joy and beauty of dance, instilling peoples' lives with a transportive sense of magic and grace. With performances that are full of "musicality, technical skill, attention to detail, intelligence and heart," (*Dance International Magazine*) Cheng celebrates twenty years as a professional dancer, closing out her decade-long tenure as Principal Dancer for the Oregon Ballet Theatre with a final performance in February 2023, and joining the Hong Kong Ballet as Ballet Mistress and Principal Dancer.



Ye Li - Executive Director, Oregon International Ballet Academy

Known for his astonishing technique and sensitive musicality, award-winning choreographer Ye Li presents dynamic, meaningful performance with exquisite detail. His lush and gripping *You Will Return* won 2nd place in the Palm Desert Choreography Festival (2019) among 145 submissions. The piece made its international debut in performance at The Achievement Exhibition of the 12th "TaoLi Cup" National Dancing Education Performance of China in 2019. A multi-award-winning performer, Li soloed with Oregon Ballet Theatre for four years, and is now the Rehearsal Director of OBT2, Oregon Ballet Theatre's Junior company.

Casa de Arte

Casa de Arte is a celebrated dance and performance studio in Kumamoto, Japan focused on both traditional ballet and Argentine tango, founded by Hernan Gomez and Maki Fujita (a former member of the Stuttgart Ballet). Considered "the ballet jewelry box for the children in Kumamoto," Casa de Arte hosts frequent performances and is a central hub for ballet teachers in the region. Having directed studios in both New York City and Japan, Gomez and Fujita bring worldly knowledge to their performance and teaching.



Guest Artist: Tango Hayato Fujita-Gomez

At just nineteen years old, Fujita-Gomez enjoys the role of assistant ballet & tango teacher at Casa de Arte, Kumamoto. Born in New York City, Fujita-Gomez moved with his family to Japan when he was one year old. He started dancing Argentine Tango at the age of three, joined the boy's ballet class at the Kumamoto Ballet Institute at the age of eight, and was honored to perform as Franz in Kumamoto Ballet Theater's "Nutcracker" at the age of 11.



Guest Artist: Evan Swenson

Artist, dancer and teacher Evan Swenson brings his knowledge, passion, and love for dance into every setting. Evan is the Managing Director for BalletRED's 22/23 season, and has danced with many companies across the US, including Houston Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, New York Theater Ballet, with additional freelancing in Los Angeles, New York, Europe, and China. He is featured in tv and film on Syfy's FaceOff, Mattel's Barbie in the Pink Shoes, Petals on the Wind, and many other commercial projects. Evan continues to teach and perform while working towards a BA through the LEAP program at St. Mary's College of CA.



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