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MILWAUKEE BALLET

MICHAEL PINK, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

MILWAUKEE BALLET PRESENTS HOLIDAY FAVORITE *THE NUTCRACKER*

- Nearly 200 dancers to perform across three weekends of festive performances -

Milwaukee, WI – November 19, 2024 – Milwaukee Ballet will stage its acclaimed new production of *The Nutcracker* for a second year this December 7-24 at Marcus Performing Arts Center. Subtitled *Drosselmeyer's Imaginarium*, last year's world premiere of Artistic Director Michael Pink's fresh take on the holiday classic set record attendance numbers and earned rave critical reviews, including praise as "utterly spectacular" from *Chicago Tribune*.

"I am delighted that both new and returning audiences embraced our reimagined *Nutcracker* with such enthusiasm," says Pink. "As we enter year two, I hope families, friends, and loved ones make more treasured memories together while letting their imaginations run free."

This year's audiences can expect to see continued updates to the all-new costumes and sets as the artistic team quests toward perfection. Designed by Gregory A. Poplyk and Todd Edward Ivins, respectively, the new aesthetic elevates holiday cheer to dazzling new heights.

The full Company of Milwaukee Ballet's Artists will be joined by dancers from trainee company Milwaukee Ballet II and over 120 students from Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy (MBSA). The chance to perform alongside career Artists is a special opportunity for students looking to pursue dance.

"Our students look up to the Company Artists so much, and every year they are ecstatic to perform alongside their idols," says School Director Kristin Dimmer. "We are proud to provide this professional performance experience, along with many other unique opportunities, throughout each school year."

Milwaukee Ballet's Orchestra will perform Tchaikovsky's beloved score at all performances. The Company is one of the very few in the nation to maintain its own group of talented musicians, valuing live music as one of the most atmospheric elements of ballet productions.

The Nutcracker: Drosselmeyer's Imaginarium will be performed for the public 15 times across three weekends, plus three student matinees and one sensory-friendly performance.

Student matinees provide free or subsidized tickets for public, private, and homeschooled student groups from around the state. Funds from Angel Ornaments sold at the Ballet Boutique go towards bringing these students to the theater, many of whom experience ballet for the first time.

The sensory-friendly performance is designed to welcome guests who have sensory-processing sensitivities, identify as neurodivergent, or benefit from greater accessibility. It is also suitable for others, such as younger children, who would benefit from a more relaxed performance. Production modifications include the removal of flashing lights, stage fog, and sudden sounds; relaxed house rules include house lights remaining on, doors remaining open, and the ability for attendees to move around the theater as needed.

“Student matinees and the sensory-friendly performance make the holidays so special for those they serve,” says Pink. “The energy in the theater, both onstage and off, is equally as powerful as it is moving.”

The Nutcracker: Drosselmeyer’s Imaginarium was brought to life last December through the generosity of over 375 individual and institutional donors. This year’s production is made possible thanks to Presenting Sponsor BMO, with additional support from Principal Sponsor von Briesen & Roper s.c. and Artistic Sponsor Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin.

The Company looks forward to welcoming audiences of all ages this holiday season.

Synopsis

On Christmas Eve, the Tannenbaum children eagerly await the arrival of their godfather Drosselmeyer, a mysterious toymaker. Upon his arrival, very strange things begin to happen...the Christmas tree grows, toys come to life to battle King Rat, and the children are ushered into the Imaginarium, a place where anyone can imagine anything they wish. There, they embark on a colorful and magical adventure that will leave them wondering if it was all real, or only just their imagination.

Performance Information

The Nutcracker: Drosselmeyer’s Imaginarium runs December 7-24 at Marcus Performing Arts Center. Tickets start at \$48 and are available for purchase via the Milwaukee Ballet Box Office at 414-902-2103 or online at milwaukeeballet.org.

The performance schedule is as follows:

- Saturday, December 7, 2024 – 2:00 PM
- Saturday, December 7, 2024 – 7:30 PM
- Sunday, December 8, 2024 – 1:00 PM
- Wednesday, December 11, 2024 – 6:00 PM (Sensory-Friendly Performance)
- Friday, December 13, 2024 – 7:30 PM
- Saturday, December 14, 2024 – 2:00 PM
- Saturday, December 14, 2024 – 7:30 PM
- Sunday, December 15, 2024 – 1:00 PM
- Thursday, December 19, 2024 – 7:30 PM
- Friday, December 20, 2024 - 7:30 PM

- Saturday, December 21, 2024 – 2:00 PM
- Saturday, December 21, 2024 – 7:30 PM
- Sunday, December 22, 2024 – 1:00 PM
- Sunday, December 22, 2024 – 6:30 PM
- Monday, December 23, 2024 – 7:30 PM
- Tuesday, December 24, 2024 – 1:00 PM

Milwaukee Ballet's 2024/2025 Season is presented by Donald & Donna Baumgartner and the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF), with support from Wisconsin Arts Board, CAMPAC, Milwaukee Arts Board, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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About Milwaukee Ballet

Milwaukee Ballet was founded in 1970. Led by Artistic Director Michael Pink, Milwaukee Ballet creates a rich and diverse community through its inspiring dance performance, education, and outreach. Milwaukee Ballet hosts an international Company of dancers and maintains its own orchestra. Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy is the only professional dance school in the Midwest accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance, teaching beginner through pre-professional levels in three locations: Third Ward, Fox Point, and Brookfield. Milwaukee Ballet's award-winning Community Engagement department serves thousands of people in Southeastern Wisconsin each year through original, interactive programs. Milwaukee Ballet is a proud cornerstone member of United Performing Arts Fund and holds a four-star rating from Charity Navigator.

Note to Editors: Interviews with Milwaukee Ballet Artistic Director Michael Pink and high-resolution images are available upon request.