MILWAUKEE BALLET | MICHAEL PINK ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

the Nutcracker

Family Guide for *The Nutcracker: Drosselmeyer's Imaginarium*

As of October 20, 2026. Subject to change.

It is a great privilege to be part of *The Nutcracker*. Cast members and their parents/guardians are expected to read all information about the production, stay fully informed throughout rehearsals and performances, respect this opportunity, and conduct themselves professionally during this process. Please carefully read through the following information and keep this for reference.

COMMUNICATION

- **Nearly all communication regarding *The Nutcracker* will be done via email and posted online. Bookmark this link! https://milwaukeeballet.org/student-cast-information**
- We must have two contact phone numbers for each student dancer.
- The Student Cast contact list will be distributed in late November/early December so you can communicate with your student's alternate cast member in case of an emergency.
- Contact information for repetiteurs (rehearsal faculty) and School Programs Coordinator Caitlyn Nettesheim can be found on the final page of this packet.

MANDATORY CAST MEETING

- **Saturday, October 10 from 2:00-3:30pm in person at Baumgartner Center for Dance, Studio B**
- **Mandatory for all student cast members and one parent/guardian of each student**, even if you have been in the show in past years. Exceptions only for those who listed this conflict on their audition form.
- Volunteer Sign-up details will be reviewed
- Bring your personal planner

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND WHEN TO CALL

Baumgartner Center	414-902-2100	Monday-Friday and during weekend rehearsals
Staff Cell Phone	414-334-1114	For use only when students are at the Marcus PAC

VENUES

Baumgartner Center for Dance
128 N Jackson St, Milwaukee, WI 53202

- Location of auditions, cast meeting, costume fittings, studio rehearsals
- Ample street parking available and pay-to-park lots nearby
- Loading zone for quick drop off and pickup. No parking here. Do not leave your car unattended.

Marcus Performing Arts Center, Stage Door
Located under the skywalk between parking structure and theatre
127 E. State Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202

- Cast member and volunteer entrance and exit for stage rehearsals and performances
- Metered street parking or parking structure available
- Only credit card payments or pre-paid passes when entering the parking garage
- Large loading zone for drop offs and pickups, but do not leave your car unattended
- Audience members enter the lobby at 929 N. Water Street

HEALTH & SAFETY

As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, there are specific health and safety protocols that must be adhered to per Marcus Performing Arts Center and our dancers' union, the American Guild for Musical Artists (AGMA). Masking and testing requirements may change based on current conditions in our community, and we ask for your patience and cooperation in following these protocols.

- Students are not required to have or submit proof of COVID-19 vaccination.
- At this time, all students cast in *The Nutcracker* are asked to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and potential exposure to the virus. Students are asked to mask anytime they are experiencing symptoms, are waiting for test results, and/or have been exposed.
- Any testing late implemented and required by Milwaukee Ballet of student cast members is the responsibility of the student cast member and their family.

COVID-19 vaccination status, masking, and COVID-19 testing requirements are subject to change and may be applicable to any and all students cast in *The Nutcracker*.

TICKET INFORMATION

- Students are able to receive discounted tickets to all performances. Discount codes will be shared upon casting. Discounts include:
    - 20% discount for regular tickets for all shows with promo code **MBSA2627**.
    - Share a 15% discount code to share with your Friends & Family with promo code **FFMBSA**.
    - 50% off Day-Of-Show Discount code **DAYOF50** to use at Baumgartner Center for Dance Box Office or Marcus Performing Arts Center Box Office (a $5/ticket fee will apply at MPAC).
- Ticket exchanges cost $1/seat except for families with students in *The Nutcracker* cast (when ticket exchanges for cast reasons are complimentary).
- Please note Milwaukee Ballet Box Office normally charges a $5/ticket transaction fee. For MBSA parents, Milwaukee Ballet Box Office will waive all handling fees on purchases made via phone (414-902-2103) or in person. If you buy tickets through Marcus PAC Box Office, the ticket transaction fee is $5/ticket (in-person) and $8/ticket (via phone). Tickets are also available online through Ticketmaster (via www.milwaukeeballet.org), but Ticketmaster fees will be applied.
- **Students performing in the show do not need a ticket, unless they dance in Act I (Party Scene and Battle Scene) and will be joining a parent/guardian to watch Act II from the audience.** If your student is in Act I only, please plan to pick them up during intermission or purchase a ticket for them to join you in the audience for Act II.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

- Volunteers are critical to the success of the show and provide an exciting insiders' look at the production.
- Volunteer opportunities will be discussed at the mandatory full cast meeting.
- Volunteers may be subject to comply with health and safety policies.
- Only Backstage Supervisors who are volunteering for the specific performance/rehearsal are allowed in the backstage area.
- A volunteer badge will be issued to the backstage supervisors for the scheduled rehearsals and performances.
- Volunteers must attend a training session in late November.
- Discounted parking vouchers may be available to volunteers to use when they are on duty.

STUDIO REHEARSALS (At the Baumgartner Center for Dance)

- **All rehearsals are required unless you report a prior commitment at auditions.**
- In case of an emergent absence, please email and notify your repetiteur (rehearsal director) as soon as possible. Contact details for each repetiteur are listed at the end of this packet.
- Be ready to dance, not arriving to the building, at the beginning of each scheduled rehearsal.
- Dress in regular ballet class attire.
- Artistic Staff has the right to replace any cast member due to missed or late arrival to rehearsals.
- When students rehearse with the Company, some last-minute schedule changes may be unavoidable and will be communicated as soon as possible.
- Ballet classes missed for rehearsals do not count toward overall attendance records.
- Submit the letter received in the email with your acceptance packet to your student's academic school, if needed, to support absences from school for rehearsals or performances.

THEATRE REHEARSALS (At the Marcus Performing Arts Center)

- Always come dressed in regular ballet class attire with warm-up clothes to wear over dance attire.
- Always wear performance hair and make-up as you have been instructed to when attending these rehearsals.
- Arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of rehearsals at the Marcus PAC, unless the calendar lists otherwise.

PERFORMANCES

- Always have your regular ballet class attire with you at the theater. Some preparations will take place out of costume, so students need ballet attire to wear.
- See below for details about costumes and make-up. Hair and make-up must be complete before arriving to the theater.
- You must adhere to your committed performance dates and times. You are "on call" for your alternate's performances.
- Alternate casts are for emergency use only – not for convenience. Do not call your alternate unless you have a critical situation that prevents your student from dancing.
- If non-illness emergency circumstances arise that warrant your student's absence from a scheduled performance, first contact your alternate and then call 414-334-1114 to inform a staff member.
- In the event that your student has a positive COVID-19 test result, COVID-19 symptoms, or close contact with a positive case, please immediately call 414-334-1114 (available 24/7) to report this.
- "On call" alternate cast members must always be available by phone in case of an emergency for all alternate performances. Cast A & B are alternates for each other. Cast C & D are alternates for each other.
- Keep your performance supplies with you if you are away from home during an alternate performance.
- **If a cast member is more than 10 minutes late and has not spoken to a Staff Member, an alternate will be called and the scheduled cast member will not dance at that performance, even if they arrive late.**
- The show is 2 hours long, every time. Cast members must be picked up on time after each performance. It will take the students a few minutes to change and return to the stage door, but every student must be picked up within 2 hours and 15 minutes after the show begins. If there are any students not picked up by that time, their families will be charged a fee of $1 for every minute they are not picked up.
- Students only performing in Act I do not wait until the end of the show to leave. See details below as to when your student should be picked up.

For Performances, the time the show begins is listed on the calendar.
Students arrive and depart as follows.

ALL STUDENT CAST MEMBERS MUST CHECK IN WITH MBSA STAFF AT THE STAGE DOOR BEFORE REPORTING TO THE DRESSING ROOMS. IF THE STAFF HAS STEPPED AWAY, PLEASE WAIT FOR THEM TO RETURN.

ROLE	ACT	ARRIVAL TIME	DEPARTURE TIME
Friends	Act I	90 minutes before showtime	75 minutes after showtime
Prologue Characters	Act I	90 minutes before showtime	75 minutes after showtime
Party Kids	Act I	75 minutes before showtime	75 minutes after showtime
Soldiers	Act I	45 minutes before showtime	75 minutes after showtime
Mice	Act I & Act II	45 minutes before showtime	90 minutes after showtime
Fanfare Trumpeters	Act II	15 minutes before showtime	2 hours 15 minutes after showtime (end of show)
Capital City, Balloons, Chefs, & Madame Bonbon	Act II	15 minutes before showtime	2 hours 15 minutes after showtime (end of show)
Swans	Act II	15 minutes before showtime	2 hours 15 minutes after showtime (end of show)

COSTUME FITTINGS

- All Student Cast members require at least one costume fitting with the Wardrobe Department at the Baumgartner Center for Dance.
- **Wear regular ballet class attire to fittings. Long hair must be neatly pulled away from face and neck.**
- Students must be accompanied to their fitting by a parent/guardian or other adult that remains present throughout the fitting.

COSTUMES

- Arrive to the theater with hair and make-up done.
- Always wear or have with your regular ballet class attire for both rehearsals and performances.
- Wear a button down or zip shirt to prevent messing up hair and make-up when changing into costumes.
- Bring extra supplies (hair spray, bobby pins, hair net, make-up, etc.)
- Use hair gel, hair spray, or spritzer to slick hair back smoothly, if required.
- No nail polish, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, watches, or rings may be worn on stage.
- No underwear under costumes or leotard and tights, except boys as listed below.
- All students must wear clear drying deodorant/anti-perspirant with costumes.
- All costume pieces will be provided except those listed in the last column below.
- Mice, Swans, Capital City, Fanfare Trumpeters, Bonbons, Chefs, and any students performing in a wig must provide their own wig cap. These are inexpensive and available online or at beauty supply stores.
- Costumes must only be worn/used as intended. No rolling on the ground or running in costumes.
- Use extra care with delicate parts of costumes like teeth, tails, heads, etc.
- Any costume issues should be reported to the wardrobe staff directly and immediately.

- Finally, while this may be a sensitive issue, please know that even when students are on their menstrual cycle, they must still adhere to costume requirements. There are many articles online with creative solutions to this often self-conscious issue that all young dancers face. Please help your student work through this important need. Thank you!

COSTUME SPECIFICS ARE STILL BEING DEVELOPED AND WILL BE UPDATED AS AVAILABLE.

ROLE	HAIR REQUIREMENTS	MAKE-UP REQUIREMENTS	ITEMS PROVIDED BY THE STUDENT
MATCHSTICK GIRL	Long hair: French braids very flat against the head (wig prep but no wig worn) Short hair: natural hair style	See "Children in Snow" Plus "dirty" face make up using dark eye shadow.	Regular ballet class attire
CHILDREN IN SNOW	Girl Roles Hair half-up/half down slicked straight back (no part), ringlet/uncombed curls. See "Party Kids" example photo. Boy Roles Long Hair: divided into sections with many small pin curls or French braids very flat against the head; own wig cap required Short hair: natural hair style	Girl Roles wear mauve or soft brown eye shadow and a light application of dark brown eyeliner and one coat of mascara. Medium pink lipstick (a shade that brightens the natural lip color, not one that changes your lip color) and rouge (soft and blended) should be worn. Boy Roles wear a very light application of brown eyeliner, one light coat of mascara, brownish blush, and neutral lipstick.	Regular ballet class attire
FRIENDS	Girl Roles Hair half-up/half down slicked straight back (no part), ringlet/uncombed curls. See "Party Kids" example photo. Boy Roles Long hair: divided into sections with many small pin curls or French braids very flat against the head; own wig cap required. Short hair: natural hair style	Girl Roles wear mauve or soft brown eye shadow and a light application of dark brown eyeliner and one coat of mascara. Medium pink lipstick (a shade that brightens the natural lip color, not one that changes your lip color) and rouge (soft and blended) should be worn. Boy Roles wear a very light application of brown eyeliner, one light coat of mascara, brownish blush, and neutral lipstick.	Girl Roles - Pink tights, flesh tone leotard with fabric straps. Boy Roles –Pink tights only (no leotards under costume pants) and bra if needed; or short sleeve white t-shirt and dance belt.
PARTY KIDS	Girl Roles Half-up/half down slicked straight back (no part), ringlet/uncombed curls. Example →  Boy Roles Long Hair: divided into sections with many small pin curls or French braids very flat against the head; own wig cap required Short hair: natural hair style	Girl Roles wear mauve or soft brown eye shadow and a light application of dark brown eyeliner and one coat of mascara. Medium pink lipstick (a shade that brightens the natural lip color, not one that changes your lip color) and rouge (soft and blended) should be worn. Boy roles wear a very light application of brown eyeliner, one light coat of mascara, brownish blush and neutral lipstick.	Girl Roles - Pink tights and flesh tone leotard with fabric straps Boy Roles - Pink tights only (no leotards under costume pants) and bra if needed; or short sleeve white t-shirt and dance belt

ROLE	HAIR REQUIREMENTS	MAKE-UP REQUIREMENTS	ITEMS PROVIDED BY THE STUDENT
MICE	Hair in a medium bun to hide under costume head. Own wig cap.	No make-up	Regular ballet class attire
SOLDIERS	Long hair should be parted in the middle in two high buns on either side, close together, on top of the head to be hidden under the hat. See photo example: 	No make-up	Regular ballet class attire
SWANS	Long Hair: divided into sections with many small pin curls or French braids very flat against the head; own wig cap required Short hair: natural hair style, hair secured away from face	No make-up	Pink tights and skin-toned leotard with fabric straps; or a white t-shirt and dance belt.
FANFARE TRUMPETERS	Long Hair: divided into sections with many small pin curls or French braids very flat against the head; own wig cap required Short hair: natural hair style	See "Capital city / Bonbons" below	Regular ballet class attire
CAPITAL CITY, BALLOONS, & MADAME BONBON	Long Hair: divided into sections with many small pin curls or French Braids very flat against the head; own wig cap. Short Hair: natural hair style.	Girl Roles wear mauve or soft brown eye shadow and a light application of dark brown eyeliner and one coat of mascara. Medium pink lipstick (a shade that brightens the natural lip color, not one that changes your lip color). No blush/rouge necessary, adhesive cheek appliques to be provided. Boy Roles wear a very light application of brown eyeliner, one light coat of mascara, brownish blush, and neutral lipstick.	Pink tights and skin-toned leotard with fabric straps; or a white t-shirt and dance belt.

CAST T-SHIRTS

- Cast t-shirts will be designed and will feature the full students cast members' names on the back. Details will be distributed this fall.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

With nearly 150 students involved in The Nutcracker production each year, parent volunteers are needed backstage to help coordinate all these students in the performance. We hope you will consider giving time to this year's production.

First time volunteers are required to complete an online volunteer application, and a criminal background check will be processed. Only after your volunteer application is approved will you receive the volunteer slot sign-up link(s). Initially, approved parent volunteers may sign up for one of each opportunity available. After the initial sign-up period, they may volunteer for any remaining open slots.

Volunteers and students can purchase Flex Park Pass options from Interstate Parking to use in the Marcus PAC garage. Additional information will be distributed via email.

Backstage Volunteers – All Student Cast Roles, except "Friends"

This is an exciting way to see the performance from a unique point of view and get a glimpse of the behind-the-scenes action. Volunteers are responsible for supervising students while in dressing rooms and assisting with costumes. Student cast members must adhere to posted guidelines and these guidelines are to be enforced by volunteers. Volunteers are able to watch their group perform from backstage. Female backstage volunteers are needed for all roles. A male volunteer is needed for each show whenever boys are scheduled to perform. Backstage volunteers arrive 15 minutes prior to the arrival time of the role for which they are volunteering and depart after the students in their group are dismissed.

Check-out – All Student Cast Roles

While the staff is running the show backstage, a volunteer is needed to check students out at the stage door as they are dismissed after dancing. This is a quiet place to sit and get personal work done between waves of students leaving. The staff will take over for the rush after the show. The Check-out volunteer arrives to the stage door at the start of the performance and remains until the staff member arrives as the show ends.

Ballet Boutique and Other Marketing Opportunities – All Student Cast Roles

Volunteer slots for working at the Ballet Boutique and other marketing opportunities will be shared via email directly from Milwaukee Ballet's marketing team.

FOOD

- Eat a light balanced meal up until two hours prior to a performance.
- No eating or drinking is allowed in the dressing rooms.
- No eating or drinking is allowed while wearing costumes.
- The vending machines are off limits to student cast members.
- Students can eat only in designated areas during Act II and only after their responsibilities have been completed on stage and they are out of costume.

CONTACT INFORMATION

All questions regarding *The Nutcracker* Student Cast should be directed to:
Caitlyn Nettesheim, School Programs Coordinator
cnettesheim@milwaukeeballet.org | 414-902-2149

In the case of an emergent absence from any studio rehearsal, please email your role's repetiteur(s) (rehearsal directors) as soon as possible.

Prologue, Party Kids & Friends (Party Scene)	Tori Stevenson	vstevenson@milwaukeeballet.org
Soldiers & Mice (Battle Scene)	Pedro Lapetra	plapetra@milwaukeeballet.org
Swans	Kaitlyn King Lisa Moberly	kking@milwaukeeballet.org lmoberly@milwaukeeballet.org
Capital City & Balloons	Kristi DelVerne	kdelverne@milwaukeeballet.org
Madame Bonbon & Fanfare Trumpeters	Aisling Nussear	anussear@milwaukeeballet.org

Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

Once again, THANK YOU for your dedication to *The Nutcracker*!

We are looking forward to a great production!