



Photo: Alexander Iziliaev

Experience L.A.

# George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*®

by Miami City Ballet

Friday, November 30, 2018  
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion  
Los Angeles

## KNOW BEFORE THE SHOW

- ◉ *The Nutcracker* is one of the most famous ballets of all time, and a holiday tradition for many.
- ◉ This production features the choreography of George Balanchine (1904–1983), who is considered the foremost ballet choreographer of the twentieth century.
- ◉ The ballet will be performed by Miami City Ballet, an esteemed company that focuses on the works of Balanchine.

## THE NUTCRACKER

Peter Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, about a girl who befriends a nutcracker that comes to life on Christmas Eve, is a holiday tradition and one of the most popular ballets of the modern era. It was the last of three ballets composed by Tchaikovsky (the first being *Swan Lake*), and it was first performed in 1892 at the famed Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg. The plot is loosely based on *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, a story by the German Romantic author E. T. A. Hoffmann.

While composing *The Nutcracker*, Tchaikovsky traveled through Paris, where he heard an instrument he had never heard before: the celesta, a wooden keyboard instrument smaller than a piano. He found its ethereal sound to be perfect for the fairy-tale atmosphere of *The Nutcracker*, and made it the “voice” of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

*The Nutcracker* was not an immediate success—tasteless scenery and costumes, lackluster choreography by the assistant of a famed choreographer who had fallen ill, and a less-than-stellar performance by the lead ballerina have all been blamed for its initial failure. But *The Nutcracker* went on to become one of the world’s most frequently performed ballets, beloved by all ages.

## GEORGE BALANCHINE

George Balanchine (1904–1983) is considered the twentieth century’s most influential choreographer of classical ballet. Among his many famous works are *The Nutcracker* and *Don Quixote*, both of which he choreographed for New York City Ballet, of which he was a founder, artistic director, and chief choreographer. He also choreographed for films and musicals.

Born in Georgia, Balanchine studied at the Russian Imperial School of Ballet (later the Soviet State School of Ballet) at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. He danced and choreographed for Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, the Royal Danish Ballet, and the avant-garde company Les Ballets, among others, before starting the American Ballet company, which became for a time the home company of New York’s Metropolitan Opera. That partnership came apart in 1938, and by 1948 Balanchine had founded New York City Ballet, which he helmed for four decades.

Balanchine collaborated with musicians including Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg, and produced a repertoire that has been performed by almost all of the world’s major ballet companies. He transformed American ballet and twentieth-century ballet.

## MIAMI CITY BALLET

Miami City Ballet is one of the world’s preeminent interpreters of the choreography of George Balanchine. The company was founded in 1985 by philanthropist Tony Lerner Astin and ballet legend Edward Villella, who was a principal dancer at New York City Ballet during Balanchine’s tenure; it is led today by artistic director Lourdes Lopez. Miami City Ballet’s repertoire was built on Balanchine’s choreography and technique, and has expanded to include other important works of classical ballet as well as contemporary works.

## GLORYA KAUFMAN PRESENTS DANCE AT THE MUSIC CENTER

Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at the Music Center is one of the leading presenters and commissioners of dance on the West Coast, presenting significant works by renowned international ballet and contemporary dance artists. Philanthropist Glorya Kaufman (who is the widow of Donald B. Kaufman, the co-founder, with Eli Broad, of Kaufman and Broad) has said, “I am focusing on and prioritizing dance, which is the most neglected art form whose benefits to mankind go far beyond entertainment.”



The Miami City Ballet production of *The Nutcracker*



George Balanchine



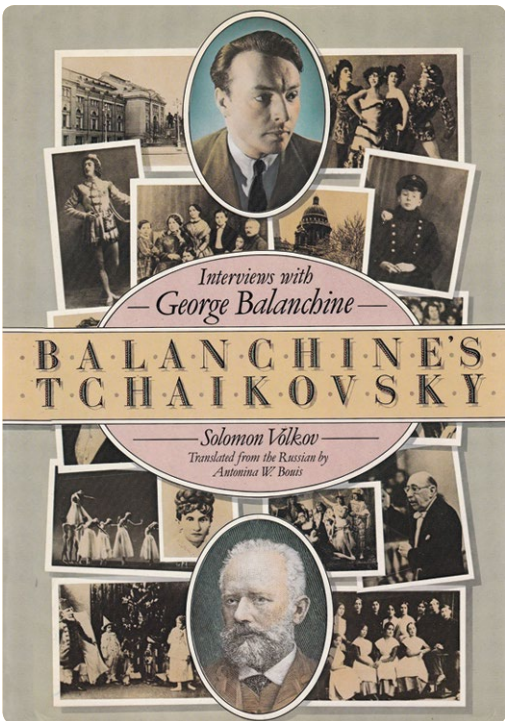
George Balanchine with Suzanne Farrell in *Don Quixote*



Dorothy Chandler Pavilion seen from the Mark Taper



The interior of Dorothy Chandler Pavilion



## DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion is one of four venues at the Los Angeles Music Center, one of the largest performing-arts centers in the United States. Across the street from Walt Disney Concert Hall (home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic) and sharing a plaza with the Ahmanson Theatre, which offers large-scale theatrical productions, and the smaller Mark Taper Forum, where more intimate and innovative theatre pieces are featured, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion is the home of LA Opera and Gloria Kaufman Presents Dance at the Music Center.

Built from 1962 to 1964, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion was designed by Los Angeles architect Welton Becket under the aesthetic principal of “total design”—meaning that everything from the building’s structure and engineering to its interior design were overseen by a single designer to create a unified look. The interior of the five-story Dorothy Chandler Pavilion features 78 crystal light fixtures, including three chandeliers each made with 24,000 pieces of hand-polished crystal from Munich. Prior to the construction of Disney Hall, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion was the longtime home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Between 1969 and 1999, numerous Academy Awards ceremonies were held here. The building is named for Dorothy Buffum Chandler (1901–1997), a fundraiser who helped save the Hollywood Bowl from financial crisis and led an almost decade-long campaign that raised the majority of the funds to build the Music Center. Her husband, Norman Chandler, was the publisher of the *Los Angeles Times* from 1945 to 1960, when he was succeeded by the couple’s son, Otis.

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

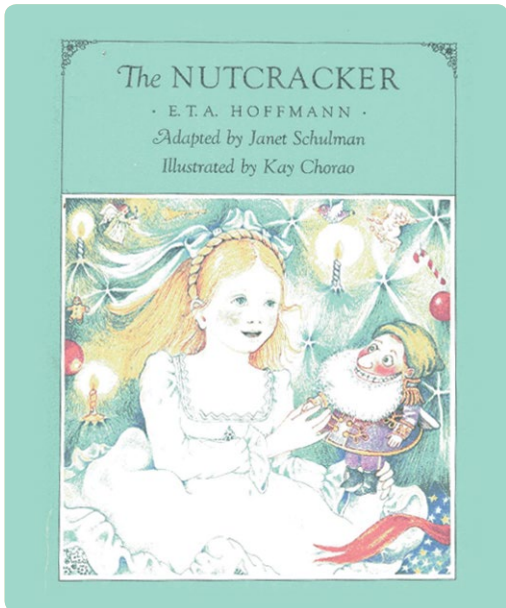
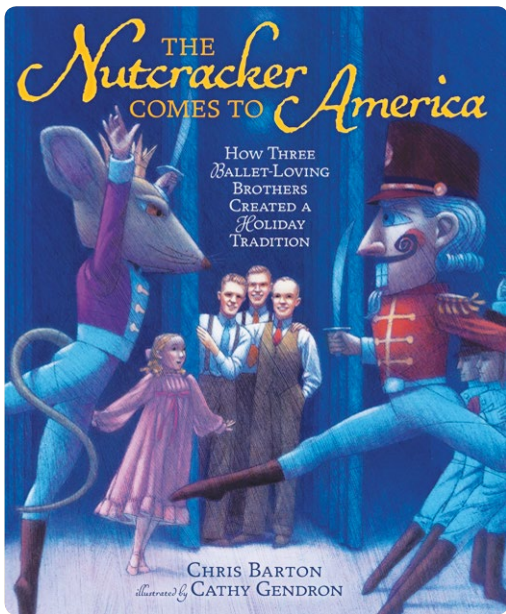
- George Balanchine’s choreography has been described as “neoclassical.” What did you see in this performance that looks more “neoclassical” than “classical” to you?
- Is *The Nutcracker* part of your family’s holiday tradition? Is this the first time you’ve seen it? How do you think your experience of the performance is shaped by that?
- Were you able to identify the unique sound of the celesta?

## IF YOU LIKED THIS PERFORMANCE, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT

- Gloria Kaufman Presents Dance at the Music Center  
[musiccenter.org/tickets/events-by-the-music-center/Gloria-Kaufman-Dance](http://musiccenter.org/tickets/events-by-the-music-center/Gloria-Kaufman-Dance)
- Los Angeles Ballet  
[losangelesballet.org](http://losangelesballet.org)
- The USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance  
[kaufman.usc.edu](http://kaufman.usc.edu)

## DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

**ANTHONY ANDERSON** of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about *The Nutcracker*, George Balanchine, and Peter Tchaikovsky. Those with a call number (e.g., books) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g. journal articles and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at [libraries.usc.edu](http://libraries.usc.edu).



## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- ☉ Barton, Chris, and Cathy Gendron, *The Nutcracker Comes to America: How Three Ballet-Loving Brothers Created a Holiday Tradition*. Minneapolis, MN: Millbrook Press, 2015.  
**DOHENY LIBRARY: OVERSIZE GV1790.N8 B37 2015**
- ☉ Barnes, Clive, Costas, and George Jackson. *Balanchine: Celebrating a Life in Dance*. Windsor, Conn.: Tide-mark Press, 2003.  
**DOHENY LIBRARY: OVERSIZE GV1786.N4 B35 2003X**
- ☉ Kearney, Leslie. *Tchaikovsky and His World*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998.  
**MUSIC LIBRARY: ML410.C4 T36 1998**
- ☉ Schulman, Janet, Kay Choroa, and E. T. A. Hoffmann. *The Nutcracker*. 1st ed. New York: Dutton, 1979.  
**GRAND DEPOSITORY: PZ8.S31276 NU 1979**
- ☉ Balanchine, George, and Solomon M. Volkov. *Balanchine's Tchaikovsky: Interviews with George Balanchine*. Simon and Schuster, 1985.  
**MUSIC LIBRARY: ML410.C4 V583 1985.**
- ☉ Wiley, Roland John. *Tchaikovsky's Ballets: Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker*. Oxford [Oxfordshire]: Clarendon Press, 1985.  
**LEAVEY LIBRARY: ML410.C4 W53 1985**

## SELECTED AUDIO VISUAL

- ☉ Ballard, Carroll, Willard Carroll, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Donald Kushner, Peter Locke, Charles Mackerras, Maurice Sendak, Kent Stowell, Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, and Tom Wilhite. *Nutcracker: The Motion Picture*. Chicago, IL: Olive Films, 2017.  
**LEAVEY LIBRARY: CIRDsk-DVD LVYDvd 11694**
- ☉ Kinberg, Judy, Merrill Brockway, Holly Brubach, and Frank Langella. *Balanchine: The Father of American Ballet*. West Long Branch, NJ: Kultur, 2005.  
**MUSIC LIBRARY: VIDEOS MUSDvd 94**

## SELECTED DATABASES

- ☉ IIPA (International Index to the Performing Arts)
- ☉ JSTOR
- ☉ Oxford Music Online