

National Presenting Partner



B LLETTJÖRGEN

The Nutcracker

A Canadian Tradition

December 28, 2025
Centre In the Square, Kitchener



Presented by

JÖRGENDANCE

Message from the Artistic Director

Welcome to *The Nutcracker: A Canadian Tradition!*

Every year, Ballet Jörgen has the privilege of sharing this production and other ballets with over 50,000 people from coast to coast, bringing people together and to help build stronger communities through dance. The Nutcracker is a wonderful holiday tradition for so many Canadians and is often a child's first experience watching a ballet. For this reason, we are pleased to incorporate dance students into this production, as so many professional dancers start their careers as young performers in The Nutcracker!



When I thought about re-creating our Nutcracker, I wanted it to be a Canadian-inspired Nutcracker, one that would connect this wonderful ballet to our own heritage. I am particularly delighted to have created a ballet connected to one of my own favourite pastimes — canoeing in Ontario's Algonquin Park.

Sue LePage, our Set & Costume Designer and Heinar Piller, Stage Director, have contributed greatly to the creation of this unique re-imagining of the ballet. Thank you to Clea Iveson for suggesting the use of Group of Seven paintings as a backdrop for our stunning and dramatic Canadian landscapes and to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection for their help in making this uniquely Canadian production possible.

I am deeply grateful to the loyal supporters of Ballet Jörgen who have shown extraordinary generosity. In particular, I extend heartfelt thanks to several generations of the Henderson family for their pivotal role in bringing *The Nutcracker: A Canadian Tradition* to life.

This performance is made possible in part through the support of our National Presenting Partner, BMO Financial Group. The National Education and Skills Program is supported by RBC, while our Nationwide Dance for All Programming is supported by the Azrieli Foundation. Ontario Programming is supported by The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation, with additional contributions from The William and Nona Heaslip Foundation and dedicated Ballet Jörgen donors.

Thank you for coming and for making *The Nutcracker: A Canadian Tradition* part of your holiday season.

Enjoy the show!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bengt Jörgen'.

Bengt Jörgen C.M.

JÖRGENDANCE

Dance for all

For 38 years Jörgen Dance has brought the joy of dance to countless individuals, families, and communities across Canada and beyond.

While we are firmly rooted in our history as an exceptional professional ballet company, we have grown to be so much more! Today we offer a wide range of training and community programs across many dance styles to ensure dance is truly accessible for all Canadians.

Whether you are looking to attend a performance, learn to dance, or engage with the arts for the first time; there is something for you under the **Jörgen Dance** umbrella. You will be welcomed, educated, entertained, and be a respected member of our in-person and virtual community. As an organization we genuinely believe in our motto **Dance for All.**

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Synopsis

Act I

It is Christmas Eve 1912, in the small village of Bisset, Ontario, north of Algonquin Park. The community is preparing for a holiday celebration and rare respite from every-day hard labor. People are gathering, a Christmas tree is cut and everyone heads to the school house for the festivities. Klara, a young girl recently orphaned and sent to Canada to join her older sister, arrives.

With the party already in full swing, Klara is warmly welcomed by everyone except by the daughter of the one well-to-do couple in the community, with whom Klara's sister is employed as a maid. The celebrations are interrupted by the arrival of a painter who brings handmade toys for the kids and a painting for his sweetheart, the local school teacher. Klara is left without a wooden toy, since she is an unexpected arrival but then she brings out the one heirloom from her home, a beautifully decorated Nutcracker. This immediately makes her the centre of attention. Jealous, the rich girl grabs the Nutcracker and in a fit of anger throws it into the wood stove. An inconsolable Klara stomps off, hides behind a school desk and falls asleep. As the Party comes to an end and everyone is leaving, Klara's sister is growing worried. When she cannot find her sister she rushes out together with the painter and the teacher to look for Klara.



The Nutcracker: A Canadian Tradition was developed in collaboration with the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. The backdrops used in this production were inspired by "Church and Houses at Bisset" (Franklin Carmichael), "Trees and Wildflowers" (L. L. Fitzgerald), and "Snow in the Woods" (Tom Thomson).

When Klara wakes up she finds the school house deserted and growing cold. She is all alone! As the clock chimes 12 times, her world starts to change. Creatures of the wood are intruding; giant sized toys come alive and from the stove pops a life size Nutcracker. She is no longer alone. She has a friend! Together they have to face the attacks of King Bat and his cunning compatriots. A wild battle ensues, ebbing back and forth. Bowling pin Mounties join the fray, but it is Klara and the Nutcracker who save the day and defeat King Bat. As the walls of the school house fade away, Klara and the Nutcracker enter the beautiful snow covered forest on a sleigh drawn by white tailed deer. Out of the snow beautiful snowflakes appear, mesmerizing and blowing Klara and the Nutcracker deep into the forest. As the snow starts to fall, Klara and the Nutcracker are lost. Tired they fall asleep in the snow.

-INTERMISSION-

Act II

Klara wakes to find all the snow gone and the forest in full summer bloom. Amazed, she wakes the Nutcracker. The ice has turned to water with beavers, frogs and squirrels guiding Klara and the Nutcracker ever deeper into the forest until they come face to face with Lady and Lord Birch. Klara and the Nutcracker, explaining that they are lost, are welcomed to stay to meet some of the animals and flowers of the woods.

Raccoons, loons, dragonflies, bears, cottontail rabbits, flowers, a giant spruce tree and the small animals living under its branches, entertain the two guests of the forest. Finally Lord and Lady Birch sway their majestic crowns in a twirling pas de deux. Klara is exhilarated by the warm welcome and applauds them all. Bidding farewell, Klara and the Nutcracker fall asleep as they are escorted out of the forest by two bears. When Klara wakes, she is alone, back in the school house. It was all just a dream! She runs to the window, but sees no one, as she disappointedly turns back she notices her old wooden Nutcracker on the school desk and remembers her dream — she is not alone — her new world is full of beauty — places, people and creatures to meet!

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The Cast

In order of appearance, program & cast subject to change.

ACT I

WELL- TO-DO-FAMILY

DAUGHTER	Chabi Arauz
FATHER	Matthew Jordan
MOTHER	Anna Turkington
MAID	Lydia-Laure Germain

FARMING FAMILY

MOTHER	Jennifer Ramirez
FATHER	Adam Davidson
**CHILDREN	Thomas Leigh, Sarah Lai, Gabi Calhoun-Wearn

LUMBER JACKS

Ryusei Nagafuchi, Eugene Pang

**WOOD CHOPPING CHILD

Evelyn Lorrison

YOUNG WOMAN

Natalie Dixon

**YOUNG CHILD

Rooney Dadamo

GRANDMA

Taisiya Zamula

GRANDPA

Daniel Da Silva

IMMIGRATION AID

Mandi Bryce

**KLARA

Eliza Domzella

SCHOOL TEACHER

Esther Zignaigo

PAINTER

Adrián Ramirez Juárez

**SOCK BUNNY

Sarah Lai

**RATS

Rooney Dadamo, Evelyn Lorrison

HORNED OWL

Lily Villeneuve

** NUTCRACKER PRINCE

Thomas Leigh

RED FOX

Natalie Dixon

SKUNK

Daniel Da Silva

WOLF

Adam Davidson

MOOSE

Esther Zignaigo

SKIPPING ROPE HANDLES

Taisiya Zamula (1)/Anna Turkington (5) & Lydia-Laure Germain

MOUNTIES

Zoë Kindrachuk, Jennifer Ramirez, Callum McGregor, Ryusei Nagafuchi

KING BAT

Ilia Dogudovskii

SNOWMAN

Adam Davidson

**WHITE TAILED DEER

Gabi Calhoun-Wearn, Rooney Dadamo

SNOW QUEEN & CAVALIER

Risa Takeshima & Omar Hernández (1)
Akari Fujiwara & Adrián Ramirez Juárez (5)

SNOWFLAKES

Chabi Arauz, Mandi Bryce, Lydia-Laure Germain (1)/
Natalie Dixon (5), Ilia Dogudovskii, Matthew Jordan,
Eugene Pang, Anna Turkington, Taisiya Zamula

ACT II

BEAVERS

Laura Tayler* & Adam Davidson

*FROGS

Jocelyn Brooker & Lila Logan (1)

Savannah Sisco & Adela Szyszlo (5)

*SQUIRRELS

Kayden McPherson, Maggie Smith, Hope Tupling, Nevaeh Walker

*BEAR CUB

Ella Rawson

LORD & LADY BIRCH

Akari Fujiwara & Adrián Ramirez Juárez (1)

Risa Takeshima & Omar Hernández (5)

RACCOONS

Mandi Bryce & Daniel Da Silva

LOONS

Esther Zignaigo & Matthew Jordan

*YOUNG DRAGONFLIES

Caitlin Bacchus, Emily Oldridge (1)/Paulina Szyszlo (5)

DRAGONFLY

Anna Turkington (1)/Lydia-Laure Germain (5)

BEARS

Adam Davidson & Eugene Pang

COTTONTAIL RABBITS

Natalie Dixon, Lydia-Laure Germain (1)/Lily Villeneuve (5),

Taisiya Zamula

MOTHER SPRUCE

Jennifer Ramirez

*CHIPMUNKS

Jocelyn Brooker, Audrey Curl, Adela Szyszlo, Laura Taylor

TRILLIUM FLOWER

Chabi Arauz

FLOWERS

Mandi Bryce, Natalie Dixon, Ilia Dogudovskii, Lydia-Laure

Germain, Matthew Jordan, Ryusei Nagafuchi, Eugene Pang,

Taisiya Zamula (1)/Anna Turkington (5)

**Local Youth Participant Role*

***Touring Youth Participant Role*



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Audition!**



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George Brown Dance



Nutcracker Youth Community Program Credits

Local Youth Participants:

Jocelyn Brooker, Caitlin Bacchus, Audrey Curl, Lila Logan, Kayden McPherson, Emily Oldridge, Ella Rawson, Maggie Smith, Savannah Sisco, Adela Szyszlo, Paulina Szyszlo, Laura Tayler, Hope Tupling, Nevaeh Walker

Understudies: *Bear Cub- Lila Logan, Laura Taylor Chipmunk- Savannah Sisco Squirrel- Paulina Szyszlo*

Local Youth Participants Courtesy of: Carousel Dance Centre, Emotion Dance Company, Encore Dance Studio, Impact Dance Complex, Premier Dance Academy, Stage Presence School of Dance, Star Performance Academy, Strictly Rhythm Dance Academy, The Dance Centre, The Guelph Academy of Dance

Local Volunteer Rehearsal Direction: Georgia Hollingsworth

Local Rehearsal Space Courtesy of: Carousel Dance Centre

Jörgen Dance Rehearsal Directors:

Clea Iveson, Zoë Kindrachuk, Valentina Polanco, Elise Tigges, Lily Villeneuve, Aria Lara Wilton

Jörgen Dance Rehearsal Assistants & Chaperones:

Chabi Arauz, Zoë Kindrachuk, Jennifer Ramirez

Touring Youth Participants:

Lyrik Alkema, Toronto & Orillia – *Orillia Ballet Academy, Move with AW The Studio, Rebels, In Motion*

Gabi Calhoun-Wearn, Mississauga – *Sabucco's Dance Company & International Dance Academy*

Rooney Dadamo, Toronto – *Charb Arts Studios*

Madelyn Domenichetti, Burlington – *Move with AW The Studio*

Eliza Domzella, Elmira – *Carousel Dance Centre*

Aurelia Hoondert, Guelph – *Impact Dance Complex*

Sarah Lai, Markham – *Harriet Chung Performing Arts*

Thomas Leigh, Waterloo – *Davenport Dance Project*

Evelyn Lorrison, Toronto – *Charb Arts Studios*

Bodhi McBurney, Nelson, Toronto – *George Brown Dance/Jörgen Dance Academy, Front Street Dance*

Maeve Towndrow, Toronto – *Canada's National Ballet School*

Understudy: Arlo Dadamo, Toronto – *Charb Arts Studios*

Local Volunteer Rehearsal Directors: WE THANK YOU!

Brampton - Jamaica Fraser – *Innovative Artists Dance Collective*

Brantford - Jennifer Dowler - *CORE Dance Project*

Burlington – Caden Drewett - *Jörgen Dance Academy*

Guelph - Brandi Matheson & Amber Dow – *Royal City School of Ballet and Jazz*

Hamilton - Miss Sam Watson & Charli Burgoyne – *Smithville Dance Academy*

Kingston - Jasmin Lazo – *5678 Dance Studio*

Kitchener-Waterloo - Georgia Hollingsworth – *Carousel Dance Centre*

London - Karin Hobby, Monica Bian & Ainsley Morgan – *Karin Hobby Dance Academy*

Markham – Sofia Polti & Tia Marinakis – *George Brown Dance, Jörgen Dance Academy, L'Arabesque Ballet & Wonderland Dance Co.*

North Bay – Georgia Waye – *BTS Dance Corp & North Bay YMCA*

Ottawa - Lisa Brooks – *Brocadie Dance*

Ballet Jörgen Extends Special Thanks to

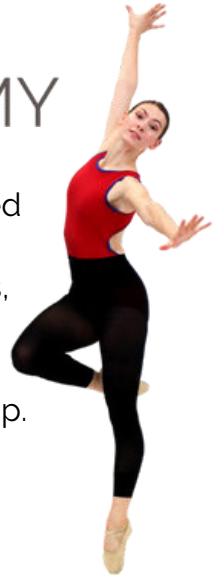
All of our volunteers that made this production possible.



SUMMER DANCE ACADEMY



Jörgen Dance offers four specialized Summer Intensive programs to dancers of various levels and ages, beginning at age 9, and a Junior Company program for pre-professional dancers, ages 18 and up.



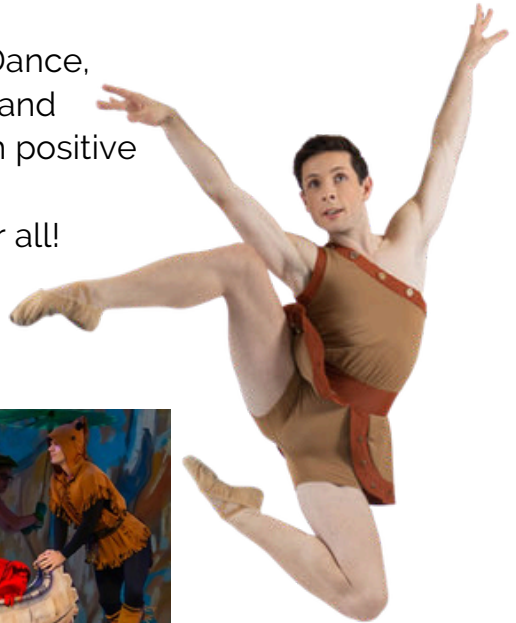
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Support Dance for all

When you donate to Jörgen Dance, you help us sustain, improve, and connect communities through positive engagement with dance. Together, We Make Dance for all!

Donate Today!



Meet Your Dancers



Chabi Arauz
Panama, Panama
Company Member
since 2024



Mandi Bryce
Maple Ridge, British Columbia
Company Member since 2025



Daniel Da Silva
São Paulo, Brazil
Company Member
since 2009



Adam Davidson
Zephyr, Ontario
Company Member
since 2019



Iliia Dogudovskii
Moscow, Russia
Company Member
since 2025



Akari Fujiwara
Aichi, Japan
Company Member
since 2017

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Lydia-Laure Germain
Montréal, Québec
Company Member
since 2021



Omar Hernández
Pinar del Rio, Cuba
Company Member
since 2022



Matthew Jordan
Adelaide, Australia
Company Member
since 2024



Adrián Ramírez Juárez
México City, Mexico
Company Member since
2014



Callum McGregor
Glasgow, Scotland
Company Member
since 2019

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Ryusei Nagafuchi
Aichi, Japan
Company Member
since 2025



Eugene Pang
Hong Kong, China
Company Member
since 2025
*Sponsored by
Kevin Goldthorp*



Risa Takeshima
Nagoya, Japan
Company Member
since 2024
*Sponsored by
Hitoshi Ohtsuji.*



Anna Turkington
Katrine, Ontario
Company Member
since 2025



Taisiya Zamula
Moscou, Russia
Company Member
since 2023



Esther Zignaigo
Lima, Péru
Company Member
since 2021



Natalie Dixon
Calgary, Alberta
RBC Apprentice



Rose Juliette
Montréal, Québec
RBC Apprentice



Lily Villeneuve
Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario
RBC Apprentice



Zoë Kindrachuk
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Mentee



Jennifer Ramirez
Caracas, Venezuela
Mentee

**Learn More About
Our Dancers**



Production Credits

Choreography Bengt Jörgen C.M.
Composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Costume & Set Design Sue LePage
Lighting Design Bonnie Beecher
Stage Direction Heinar Pillar
Creative Assistant Clea Iveson
Scenic Carpentry Hamilton Scenic Specialty
Backdrops Scenic Back Drop Studios, Richard Mongiat, Elizabeth Bailey, Katherine Lilley
Set Electrics Wireless Automations & Control Scenic Electronics
Costume Coordinator Industry Costumes
Wardrobe Buyer Susan Rome
Costume Construction Industry Costumes, Brenda Clar, Assisted by Adrienne Baker, Geoffrey Davis, Angela Arana, Yeo Lan Kwee, Linda Kirby, Maria Colella, Avril Stevenson
Millinery Monica Viani, Assisted by Katie Spreitzer
Dyeing Chrome Yellow
Props Builder Viola Frazier

BULLET JÖRGEN

Co-Founders Susan Bodie & Bengt Jörgen C.M.
Artistic Director & CEO Bengt Jörgen C.M.
Artistic Lead & Rehearsal Director Daniel Da Silva
Company Dancers Chabi Arauz⁻, Mandi Bryce, Daniel Da Silva, Adam Davidson⁻, Ilia Dogudovskii, Akari Fujiwara⁻, Lydia-Laure Germain⁻, Omar Hernández, Matthew Jordan⁻, Adrián Ramírez Juárez⁻, Callum McGregor⁻, Ryusei Nagafuchi⁻, Eugene Pang, Risa Takeshima, Anna Turkington⁻, Taisiya Zamula⁻, Esther Zignaigo
RBC Apprentices Natalie Dixon, Rose Juliette⁻, Lily Villeneuve⁻
Mentorship Students Zoë Kindrachuk, Jennifer Ramirez
Principal Character Artist Clea Iveson
Resident Choreographer Hanna Kiel
Resident Stage Direction Heinar Pillar
Production & Stage Manager Amanda Caliolo
Technical Coordinator Erwin Lau
Technical Crew Jacob Gagnon
Wardrobe Supervisor Márcio Teixeira (*Sponsored by Mary & Graham Hallward*)
Artistic Working Group Daniel Da Silva, Lydia-Laure Germain⁻, Matthew Jordan⁻, Esther Zignaigo
⁻Past RBC Foundation Apprentice Dancer
⁻George Brown Dance Graduate

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The Creation of Cottontail Rabbits for the The Nutcracker: A Canadian Tradition 15th Anniversary was Made Possible by Buchanan & Kathleen Henderson.

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