



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
October 22, 2007

Contact: Donna Lorrig, Publicity coordinator
719-337-4343; donnaballetsociety@msn.com

***Black Forest* ballerina featured in annual *Colorado Springs Philharmonic* Thanksgiving weekend *Nutcracker* performances**



Sorrel Paris (left) and Ashley Andersen present their favorite prince!

Every young girl who dons a pair of ballet slippers shares the same dream: to one day be chosen to perform the role of Clara in a professional production of Tchaikovsky's beloved *Nutcracker* ballet. For one young Black Forest dancer the dream has become reality.

Open auditions were held this past Sept. 8 to cast various roles for the Nov. 23-25 Pikes Peak Center performances of *The Nutcracker* featuring the **San Diego Ballet** and the **Colorado Springs**

Philharmonic. When the dust had settled from the almost 200 children who were vying to be cast, two girls stood above the rest- 11-year-old **Sorrel Paris (resident of Black Forest since birth)** and 14-year-old **Ashley Anderson** (niece of Black Forest residents) were chosen to share the role of Clara in the four scheduled performances. Both study at the **Ballet Society of Colorado Springs (formerly in Black Forest Community Center).**

“I’m excited, grateful, and honored,” said Sorrel, who has been studying at Ballet Society since she was nine. “A lot of girls wanted this part that is every ballerina’s dream. I was trying for Clara but I knew going into the audition I wasn’t the only girl who could do it. When I heard I got the part, I was so excited I could barely believe it. It was the part I’ve been hoping for and working toward since I started dance. It is almost too good to be true.”

Ashley Andersen, who began studying at Ballet Society after moving to Colorado Springs from Indiana two years ago, was probably the more surprised of the two. “I didn’t know who I was auditioning for. I was hoping I didn’t get to be a rat (one of the ensemble roles in the Ballet). I just wanted to get in. I’m not the most experienced dancer. I think just being myself must have helped.”

Being cast as Clara, the innocent girl whose adventures drive the story of *Nutcracker*, in a full-length, live orchestral production of Tchaikovsky’s ballet masterpiece holds a special place in the lore of American dance. First and foremost, it offers young dancers the chance to perform with professional principal performers. It is often considered to be a sign that the chosen aspiring ballerina is on track for a promising career in one of the most competitive artistic fields in the world. Now, the real work has begun.

Both girls are faced with intense rehearsals that will make them picture perfect in a little more than a two month period of preparation. “I have to practice my part a lot – it’s my first time with a principal role. Mostly, I’m trying to avoid being nervous,” said Ashley. “The dancing looks easier than it is,” added Sorrel. “And for me, this choreography often shows my bad side – dancing to the right. It’s a big challenge and yet it’s very fun at the same time.”

Sorrel and Ashley currently study in what Ballet Society calls their *Ballet IV* program in their *Pre-Professional Division*. They aspire to be accepted in the prestigious *Ballet VII* regimen which leaves dancers ready for University, apprentice and professional placement. They both excelled at the audition for Rachel Sebastian, ballet mistress for the San Diego Ballet and now work every week with Ballet Society faculty member Jennifer Hocking in the studio at 4005 Lee Vance View in northeast Colorado Springs. Faculty member Michaela Pull and Founding Artistic Director Patricia Hoffman are also working with the Colorado Springs Philharmonic and the San Diego Ballet to make sure the regional dancers meld seamlessly into this professional production.

“All of us at Ballet Society are delighted to assist in making the region’s longest-standing performances of the *Nutcracker* as fine as they can possibly be,” said Hoffman. “For the past 10 years, Ballet Society has provided at least one Clara for the Thanksgiving Weekend *Nutcrackers*. It is a tribute to the hard work and talent of Sorrell and Ashley that they earned the roles.”

Ballet Society will also provide 70 additional cast members in roles that run the gamut from tiny little mice to featured solo performances. And even as the work grows more intense for the November performances, Ballet Society’s own pre-professional company, **Colorado’s Classical Youth Ballet**, is preparing for its annual Holiday fete: *A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea* on Dec. 15 and 16 at the Rampart High School Theatre.

“I think we have found the perfect compliment to the Pikes Peak Center Nutcrackers,” said Hoffman. “We offer the most treasured excerpts from this great ballet tied together by charming narration and top it off with a post-performance party with sumptuous sweets: cookies, cakes, candies, punch and tea. I’m so proud of the level of excellence our Youth Ballet is able to attain.”

There are four performances of the complete Nutcracker in Pikes Peak Center: Fri., Nov. 23 at 8:00 pm; Sat., Nov. 24 at 2:30 and 8:00 pm; and Sun., Nov. 25 at 2:30 pm. Tickets are available at TicketsWest outlets; online at www.ticketwest.com or by calling 520-SHOW (7469) or 866- 464-2626 (toll free). For tickets or information regarding *A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea*, or for any inquiries about Ballet Society, call (719) 272-7078 or visit www.danceinthesprings.com.