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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Nov 14, 2007

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Youth Ballet presents 4th Annual Family Holiday Special: *A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea*

Even as the dancers of **Colorado's Classical Youth Ballet** gather in more and more awards and accolades for the quality of their artistic achievement, the pre-professional company is very clear about what is most important in this world. As its annual Holiday Tea and Ballet presentations show, it is the connection to family and community that truly drives the company's mission. For 2007, the presentation goes even further toward family and children. *A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea* concentrates on the most beloved ballet of all time. Performances on Sat., Dec. 15 and Sun. Dec. 16 at 1 and 5 pm on each day at Rampart High School Theatre, 8250 Lexington Drive in Colorado Springs, brings the experience of this most cherished ballet to life. And when topped off by the sweets and treats of the Holiday Tea, the entire family will find themselves entertained and delighted.

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"We think we've found an ideal entertainment - an hour long version of the Nutcracker followed by a Holiday Tea, allowing the audience to visit their own Land of the Sweets." said Holly Marble, Co-Artistic Director of the Youth Ballet and its founding organization, **The Ballet Society of Colorado Springs**.. "We want new audiences to come away from the ballet excited and with a thirst for more. We want them to attend ballet at different times of the year. But even those who are already fans of the ballet and the Nutcracker will greatly appreciate the excellence of our dancers and the charm and unique elements of our production."

Indeed, from its first incarnation four years ago, the Youth Ballet's Holiday Tea with ballet presentations have always added a special theatrical spice to the ballet while attracting sellout houses. The company was still in its first year when in Dec., 2004 it mounted *Tea for Tutu*, an in-studio performance that provided a charming glimpse into the workings of a ballet school through a story that introduced the character Delphina Ballerina. The following year, the highly-lauded *Holiday Tea with Tchaikovsky* with an original script by local arts advocate and marketing consultant David Sckolnik upped the ante. Delphina was back, only this time the great composer took her on a "heavenly" tour of his three great ballets: *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and, of course, the *Nutcracker*. Performances took place in north and south locations in Colorado Springs.

Last year, the Youth Ballet had its most successful presentation to date. The venue was ideal (the Rampart High School Theatre) the dancers outdid themselves and an updated script featured Sckolnik in the role of Tchaikovsky. "It was magical," said Patricia Hoffman, Founder and Co-Artistic Director of the Youth Ballet and Ballet Society. "Our audiences were excited and delighted, but Holly and I felt it was time for a new challenge. And since we've always wanted to do the Nutcracker, we chose to put our dancers and David to task. We hope to create a holiday memory that everyone will cherish for years to come."

So welcome *A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea!* Tchaikovsky (Sckolnik) is back to guide everyone through the beloved tale and the Youth Ballet dancers, all of whom have to audition to be selected as company members, are hard at work to make this their finest artistic accomplishment to date. "We have the Colorado Springs Conservatory Singers to warm everyone with holiday music and then they'll lead everyone into the theatre and introduce Tchaikovsky," said Marble. "From there, our story begins."

The Nutcracker will be presented with sets, costumes and lighting. But it will be the quality of the dancing that will set these performances apart from the many regional presentations of the famous ballet. The Youth Ballet, often in league with its parent organization, the Ballet Society of Colorado Springs, has become preeminent in Southern Colorado. In the past two years, collaborations have taken place with the **Colorado Springs Philharmonic**, the **Opera Theatre of the Rockies**, the **Chamber Orchestra of the Springs**, the **Colorado Springs Chorale**, the **Colorado Springs Conservatory**, and the **Colorado Vocal Arts Ensemble**. The **Colorado Springs Dance Theatre** chose the Youth Ballet to inaugurate their *Dessert, Dance and Dreams* series this past February, the only ballet ensemble so chosen.

"If you want ballet in your productions, the Youth Ballet is such an obvious choice to make," said Linda Weise, the founder and director of the Colorado Springs Conservatory who will provide a singing ensemble for the Nutcracker presentations. "They are always completely professional in their preparations and the level of their artistry is remarkable. I consider them to be a local treasure."

Admission to *A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea* is \$13 for children 12 and under & senior citizens and \$17 for all others. A group rate of \$13 is available for groups of 25 or more. Reservations are recommended. Tickets and information are available by calling the Ballet Society office at (719) 272-7078 or by email: info@danceinthesprings.com . Any inquires about the Studio or the Company can also be made in this way. Information on the Youth Ballet is available at www.coclassicalyouthballet.com/

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CALENDAR

Who: Colorado's Classical Youth Ballet, the Colorado Springs Conservatory Singers and actor David Sckolnik

What: *A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea:* The 4th annual holiday presentation from the Youth Ballet concentrates exclusively on the great Nutcracker Ballet presented by the great Tchaikovsky himself (Sckolnik). All are treated to a delicious Holiday Tea of sweets and refreshments to top off the entertainment

Where: Rampart High School Theatre, 8250 Lexington Drive

When: Saturday, Dec. 15, 2006 at 1:00 and 5:00pm
and
Sunday, Dec. 16, 2006 at 1:00 and 5:00pm

Tickets: \$17, \$13 for children under 12 and senior citizens.
Group discounts available
Available by calling (719) 272-7078 (Ballet Society studio) or by email at info@danceinthesprings.com - Reservations accepted.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

30 Second PSA

A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea is the 4th annual holiday presentation from Colorado's Classical Youth Ballet and features the beloved Nutcracker topped of by a Holiday Tea of sweets and refreshments. This family friendly presentation is hosted by the great Tchaikovsky with performances at Rampart High School on Saturday and Sunday December 15th and 16th at one and five. Tickets and information are available at the Ballet Society of Colorado Springs - 272-7078.

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Photos feature Youth Ballet performers and are available as high-res images upon request.



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