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NEWS RELEASE

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6th Annual Family A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea adds exciting featured dancer and 5th performance

CALENDAR

Who: Colorado's Classical Youth Ballet, actor **David Sckolnik** and dancer **Lawrence Jackson**

What: *A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea:* The 6th annual holiday presentation from the Classical Youth Ballet features the Nutcracker Ballet presented by the great Tchaikovsky himself (Sckolnik). All are treated to a delicious Holiday Tea of sweets and refreshments following the ballet.

Where: Rampart High School Theatre, 8250 Lexington Drive

When: Five performances:
Saturday, Dec. 19, 2009 at 1:00 and 5:00pm
Sunday, Dec. 20, 2009 at 1:00 and 5:00pm
And Monday, Dec. 21 at 7 pm

Tickets: **\$21, \$17 for children (12 and under) and senior citizens.** Group discounts available by calling (719) 272-7078 (Ballet Society studio) or by email at info@danceinthesprings.com Reservations accepted. Information on the Youth Company is available at www.coclassicalyouthballet.com

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Five years of successful presentations; sold out performances; an artistic offering that evolves and improves each year; audience members who return every Dec. – **Colorado’s Classical Youth Ballet’s *A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea*** can now be said to have achieved the status of a community tradition!

“Each year is very different,” said Patricia Hoffman, Artistic director and Founder of the Youth Ballet and its parent organization – **The Ballet Society of Colorado Springs**. “The key to our success is never being satisfied with what was previously accomplished. We’re always adding new touches and challenging our dancers to reach new levels of excellence.”

This traditional holiday favorite will feature over 50 Youth Ballet members along with 50 selected younger students from Ballet Society. The cast also features an ensemble of adult performers and guest artists. Five performances are scheduled: two each on Sat. Dec. 19 and Sun. Dec. 20, at 1:00 and 5:00 pm; this year an added performance on Mon. Dec. 21 at 7:00 pm. All are to be held in the Rampart High School Theatre, 8250 Lexington Drive in Colorado Springs.

“For any company that successfully creates a tradition such as our annual Nutcracker presentations, there’s an internal phenomenon that I find to be remarkable,” said Hoffman. “Our dancers literally ‘grow up’ in their roles. From Toy Mice to Toy Soldiers to Cherubs to Dancing Dolls to Chinese Tea to Winter Land Snowflakes to Sugar Plum Fairies and Princes. This is one of the more amazing aspects of being a part of a thriving studio and ensemble.”

The Youth Ballet’s Nutcracker has three components that distinguish it from what audiences usually receive at performances of this six-decade-old largely American tradition: one- a lavish Holiday Tea at the conclusion of the ballet performance for all in attendance; two- carefully chosen moments from this classic that always engage the audience and three; a special host to narrate the story – an actor who portrays Tchaikovsky - the legendary composer of the Nutcracker. For the fourth consecutive year, this will be local arts advocate and promoter David Sckolnik.

“I love doing this!” said Sckolnik. “With Christmas only days away from our event, young and old are ready to be transported to the magic of their favorite time of the year. We get to be the magicians!” As always, Sckolnik will perform an original script that he writes and updates every season.

This year, Lawrence Jackson, guest faculty at Ballet Society, was asked by Hoffman to perform the most exciting single moment from the Nutcracker – the show-stopping Russian dance from the final act’s journey to the “Land of Sweets.”

“I couldn’t ask for a more fun challenge to take on,” said Jackson from the University of Wyoming where he works as full-time dance faculty. “The role requires great characterization and dance distinction

along with difficult acrobatic feats. And I'll be right in the middle of so many of the dancers that I work with each year during intensives and special projects at Ballet Society. This is going to be a real treat for me." Jackson, who holds a M.F.A. in Dance from the University of Southern Mississippi and has an extensive performance history which includes four years as a featured soloist for the Denver-based **Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble**.

The Youth Ballet was founded by Hoffman and Ballet Society's former co-Artistic Director Holly Marble in 2003 as a means to assure that dancers with exceptional talent and potential receive the necessary experience to go on to professional careers. The ensemble has collaborated or been guest artists with numerous leading arts organizations in the Pikes Peak region including the **Colorado Springs Philharmonic**, the **Colorado Springs Chorale**, the **Chamber Orchestra of the Springs**, **Opera Theatre of the Rockies**, the **Colorado Springs Youth Symphony** and **Colorado Springs Dance Theatre**. Later this season, these dancers, many of whom who have received awards and scholarships from regional competitions, will be featured in "A Winter Concert" on Feb. 20 and performance of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* on May 15. Additional details will be forthcoming.

Admission for *A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea* is \$17 for children, 12 and under & senior citizens; and \$21 for all others. A rate of \$17 is available for groups of 35 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. Information on the Youth Ballet is available at www.coclassicalyouthballet.com.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

30 Second PSA

A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea is the 6th annual holiday presentation from Colorado's Classical Youth Ballet and features the great family favorite followed by a Holiday Tea of sweets and refreshments. This presentation of the Nutcracker is hosted by the great Tchaikovsky with performances at Rampart High School on Saturday and Sunday December 19th and 20th at one and five and Monday December 21st at 7. Tickets and information are available at the Ballet Society of Colorado Springs at 272-7078.

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Photos are from the Dec. 2008, A Nutcracker Ballet and Holiday Tea and feature Youth Ballet performers. (with the exception of the head shot of Lawrence Jackson) All are available as high-res images upon request.



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