

Holiday



Happenings

Holiday news and events in Northeast Ohio

April K. Helms, Special Products Editor



'Nutcracker' comes to life

by April Helms

Special Products Editor

The Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet will bring back "The Nutcracker Act II: Clara's Dream" as part of its 31st performance season.

The traditional holiday classic, with music by Tchaikovsky, will be staged at Cuyahoga Falls High School Dec. 16. This year, the Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet will premiere a newly created, custom backdrop, as well as some newly constructed costumes.

Act I of the Nutcracker will be read by Don Robart, mayor of Cuyahoga Falls, followed by Act II, danced by the 40 members of the Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet, plus four guest dancers from The Excellence in Dance Studio in Cuyahoga Falls.

Clara's dream takes her and the Nutcracker prince on a journey to the Land of Sweets, where they meet angels and the Sugarplum Fairy. They see the Waltz of the Flowers and are entertained by dancers from Spain,

China and Russia. The Mir-litons, along with Mother Ginger and her Polichinelles, add charm and humor to their journey. Clara's dream comes to an end as she awakens to find the Nutcracker, her most cherished Christmas gift, in her arms.

Dancers in the principal roles include Sugar Plum Fairy, Ashley Klinger, 17, of Cuyahoga Falls as the Sugar Plum Fairy; Brianna Habel, 17, of Cuyahoga Falls, as the Dew Drop Fairy; Amanda Merryweather, 12, of Akron as Clara; guest Derek McGuckin, 11, of Cuyahoga Falls as the Nutcracker and Chyana DeJournett, 17, of Akron as Lead Russian.

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Amanda Merryweather, 12, is Clara in the Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet's production of "The Nutcracker Act II: Clara's Dream."





Photos courtesy of the Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet

Members of the Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet rehearse their steps for the Spanish dance. The youth ballet troupe will present part of the ballet at the Cuyahoga Falls High school, followed by interactive workshops.

Following each performance, there will be theater workshops, which were a crowd favorite last year, said Marie Sargent, one of the chairs for the event.

"It went very well last year," Sargent said. "The children could have stayed for hours."

Workshops will include pointe shoe, stage makeup and costume centers. The show and workshop combined will run about two hours, Sargent said. The youth ballet troupe also will have a new activity, featuring Ron Hazlett of the West Side Vocal Academy, who will host a participatory musical theater activity. A holiday treat with Santa and an expanded Nutcracker Boutique also will be included.

Guests should have a chance to circulate through all the workshops, which will be led by adults and the older ballet students, Sargent said.

Younger dancers with the Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet will also be on hand as buddies and assistants, said Michelle Linnen with the youth ballet. This not only helps the participants with the workshops, but "the younger dancers can see the programs and become comfortable for the time in the future that they may lead it," Linnen said.

Linnen said the Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet liked to emphasize the educational aspect of the performance. She added that this ballet could be a good way to



The Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet prepares for the upcoming performance of "The Nutcracker Act II: Clara's Dream."

introduce children too young to sit through the full "Nutcracker" production to dance.

Performances will take place at Cuyahoga Falls High School, 2300 4th Street at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., with the interactive theater following.

General admission seating is available with ticket prices of \$7 for children and \$10 for adults.

Tickets can be purchased by calling 330-996-1100 or by visiting www.cvyb.org online.

**The Nutcracker: Act II:
Clara's Dream & Dance
Education
Workshop**

*Sponsored by the
Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet*

Dec. 16

Cuyahoga Falls High
School, 2300 Fourth St.
11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Admission fee: Adult
\$10, Child \$7

Call 330-996-1100 for
details