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THE ITHACA BALLET PREPARES FOR THE 17th ANNUAL NUTCRACKER PERFORMANCE

ITHACA – In the ballet world there are two seasons – Nutcracker and everything else. This is true for the Ithaca Ballet, Ithaca’s resident ballet company since 1961. For the audience, the Nutcracker is a two hour event, but it consumes months of preparation time for the dancers in the Ithaca Ballet. Auditions for children’s roles occur in September, the cast list is announced and rehearsals begin in October, out of town performances begin in November, and the cast returns to Ithaca for performances December 8-10 at the State Theater. This year the Friday evening performance, at 7:30, will feature the Fingerlakes Symphony Orchestra playing the familiar Tchaikovsky score live. The Saturday and Sunday matinee performances are at 3:00 PM.

There are over 50 dancers in the cast of the Nutcracker. Many of the dancers are part of the Ithaca Ballet company, some are guest dancers from the Ithaca community and beyond, and a large number are guest children who train with the Ballet Center of Ithaca. The cast includes faculty from local colleges and universities, PhD candidates, students from Ithaca and Cortland High Schools, home schooled students, and elementary students from many regional schools. Many of the company dancers are high school students who attend rehearsals for their own roles in addition to taking ballet classes, and running rehearsals for the guest children roles. Overseeing the entire production is Cindy Reid, the Artistic Director of the Ithaca Ballet. The Nutcracker is truly a team effort and a community treasure.

Choreographed by Lavinia Reid, the Ithaca Ballet’s Nutcracker is a treat for the whole family and an Ithaca tradition. Children of all ages will delight in Clara's victory over the mice and her voyage to the Land of Sweets. Tickets prices range from \$6 to \$17 and are available at the Clinton House, Willard Straight Hall, by calling 607-273-4497, or at www.stateofithaca.com

RELATED EVENTS

All-Brantley Repertoire

February 9-10, 2007 at the State Theater in Ithaca, NY

At the one-year anniversary of his death, the Ithaca Ballet presents a loving tribute to General Manager, **Larry Brantley**, his life and his choreography. More than 20 years of award-winning choreography will be shown: some outrageous, some hilarious, some achingly beautiful.....all Brantley. This is sure to be an unforgettable evening.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

April 28-29, 2007 at the State Theater in Ithaca, NY

Don't miss the Ithaca Ballet premiere of this magical ballet choreographed by Lavinia Reid. The exploits of Bottom, Puck, and the star-crossed lovers will delight and entertain in this ballet, based on the William Shakespeare play, and set to the well-known score by Felix Mendelssohn.

Founded in 1961, The Ithaca Ballet, housed at the Ballet Center of Ithaca, is Upstate New York's only repertory company. The ballet is a professional ensemble corps, having a varied repertoire of classical and contemporary works. Nationally known, the company tours the Finger Lakes Region.

www.ithacaballet.org