

'Nutcracker' features world-renowned ballet stars

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The Dance Foundation announced that two world-renowned ballet stars will grace the stage when The Nutcracker is presented Dec. 4-6 at the Center for the Arts at Russellville High School. This holiday ballet also features a cast of 95 local dancers from three area studios, as well as 15 community members. Performances will take place at 7 pm on Friday, Dec. 4 and Saturday, Dec. 5 and 2 pm on Sunday, Dec. 6. This production is under the direction of Ashley Miller Davis and is being sponsored by Whitson-Morgan Pre-Owned of Russellville.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$5 for children (12 and under) and are on sale now at the Russellville Whitson Morgan Pre-Owned location, at All That Dance and Just Dance studios, as well as at www.thenutcracker2015.eventbrite.com . Tickets will be available at the door the evening of the performance. Beatriz Stix-Brunell from The Royal Ballet in London, England will be performing the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy. She is a Soloist with The Royal Ballet, which she joined in 2010. She was promoted to Soloist in 2012.

Stix-Brunell began her training at the age of seven at the School of American Ballet. at Age 12, she joined the Paris Opera Ballet School. At 14, she was invited to join the legendary ballet company Morphoses. In 2012, she received a 2012 Critics' Circle Award nomination for Outstanding Female Performance (Classical). Cory Stearns will perform the role of The Prince. A native of Long Island, NY, Stearns began his classical training at Seiskaya Ballet with Mme. Valia Seiskaya. At fifteen, he participated in the Youth America Grand Prix and was offered a full scholarship to the Royal Ballet School in London.

Stearns joined American Ballet Theatre's Studio Company in September 2004, the main Company as an apprentice in January 2005 and as a member of the corps de ballet in January 2006. He was appointed a Soloist in January 2009 and a Principal Dancer in January 2011. Stearns won the 2009 Erik Bruhn Prize for best male dancer. The Nutcracker ballet is based on the story "The Nutcracker and the King of Mice" written by E.T.A. Hoffman. It is the story of a young German girl, Clara, who dreams of a Nutcracker Prince and a fierce battle against a Mouse King. In 1891, the legendary composer Tchaikovsky was commissioned to write music for the Nutcracker Ballet. In the 1930s and 40s, The Nutcracker made its way to Western Europe, and the first American full-length Nutcracker was performed by the San Francisco Ballet in 1944. Since then, it has become a classic holiday tradition throughout North America. The Dance Foundation is a local non-profit organization chartered to promote participation and appreciation for the art of dance. For tickets or more information about The Nutcracker or The Dance Foundation, please email thedancefoundation@suddenlink.net or call 479-968-6888.