

THE RYMAN HEALTHCARE SEASON OF

The NUTCRACKER



CHOREOGRAPHER VAL CANIPAROLI



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THE NUTCRACKER

CURRICULUM LINKS



In this unit you and your students will:

- Learn about the elements that come together to create a ballet experience.
- Identify the processes involved in making a theatrical production.

CURRICULUM LINKS IN THIS UNIT

Values

Students will be encouraged to value:

- **Innovation**, inquiry and curiosity, by thinking critically, creatively and reflectively.
- **Diversity**, as found in our different cultures and heritages.
- **Community and participation** for the common good.

KEY COMPETENCIES

- **Using language, symbols and text** – Students will recognise how choices of language and symbols in live theatre affect people's understanding and the ways in which they respond.
- **Relating to others** – Students will develop the ability to listen actively and share ideas regarding theatrical ballet performances.
- **Participating and contributing** – Students will be actively involved in their cultural community, understanding the importance of creative environments.
- **Thinking** – Students will reflect on their own thinking and learning after the personal experience of attending a live theatre show.

WORKSHOP LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR LEVELS 3 & 4

Level 3 students will learn how to:

Develop practical knowledge

- Use the dance elements to develop and share their personal movement vocabulary.

Develop ideas

- Select and combine dance elements in response to a variety of stimuli.

Communicate and interpret

- Prepare and share dance movement individually and in pairs or groups.
- Use the elements of dance to describe dance movements and respond to dances from a variety of cultures.

Level 4 students will learn how to:

Develop practical knowledge

- Apply the dance elements to extend personal movement skills and vocabularies and to explore the vocabularies of others.

Develop ideas

- Combine and contrast the dance elements to express images, ideas, and feelings in dance, using a variety of choreographic processes.

Communicate and interpret

- Prepare and present dance, demonstrating an awareness of the performance context.
- Describe and record how the purpose of selected dances is expressed through movement.



WHAT TO DO AT A BALLET

Talk to your students in advance about how they are expected to behave at the ballet. This will ensure that everyone gets the most out of this wonderful experience.

We recommend that you provide your students with some guidelines about what to look for and listen to during the performance. You may also want to encourage your students to add to this list.

Please feel free to:

- Watch the dancers.
- Listen to the music.
- Look at the costumes and set designs.
- Have a great time - laugh when you see the dancers do something funny.
- Show your appreciation by applauding when the dancing stops. (It is usual to applaud when the dancers take a bow).

But also remember the following:

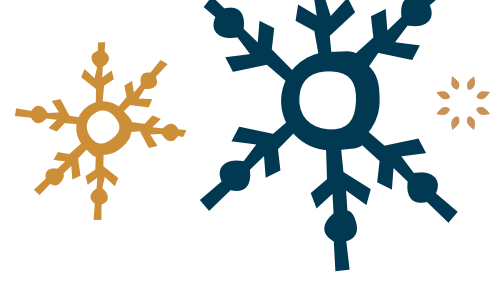
- You should go to the toilet before the show starts, or in the interval – moving around the theatre during the performance is disruptive to others.

- Unlike television or the movies, this is a live performance. Talking and other noise can distract the performers and spoil the experience for other audience members.
- Please do not eat or chew gum as this can be a distraction to others and create litter in the theatre.
- Using cell phones or other devices in the theatre is not permitted – please ensure they are switched off or on silent before the show begins.
- No photos or videos are to be taken during the show.
- Leaving your seat before the lights go on can be dangerous so stay seated until the lights come up.

Things to note:

- The School Matinee performance will begin promptly at 12.30pm and lasts approximately one hour and 15 minutes without an interval.
- All public performances will last approximately 2 hours, including a 20 minute interval.
- Please plan to arrive at the theatre at least 30 minutes prior to the performance as latecomers cannot be seated once the performance has begun.

THE STORY OF THE NUTCRACKER



The Nutcracker is based on the story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* by ETA Hoffmann. On Christmas Eve, Marie dreams that her Nutcracker Doll turns into a handsome Prince and, during a fierce battle against the Mouse King, saves Marie from the King's evil clutches. The two take a magical journey through a snowy wood, and travel through the Land of the Sweets. Arriving at Marzipan Castle, they take part in a glorious celebration of nations lead by the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier.

ACT 1

Scene 1: Drosselmeier's Workshop

Our story begins on Christmas Eve. Herr Drosselmeier, a master clock and toymaker, is putting the finishing touches on special toys that he has lovingly made for his godchildren, Marie and Fritz. He plans to give these toys to Marie and Fritz this evening at the annual party held at the home of the Stahlbaum family. As he prepares to close his store, Marie and her Mother make a surprise visit to do some last minute shopping. Marie immediately becomes infatuated with a toy, the Nutcracker, which is not quite finished. Herr Drosselmeier tries in vain to distract Marie from this special toy.

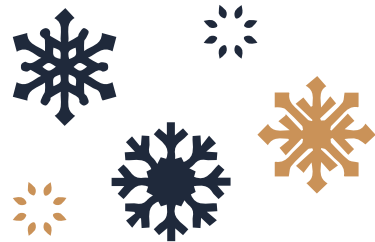
Scene 2: Marie's Bedroom

Marie can hardly contain her excitement as she prepares for the party.

Scene 3: The Party

The Stahlbaum home is festive and alive with dancing and holiday celebrations. A magnificent Christmas tree adorns the parlor. Suddenly Herr Drosselmeier bursts into the room bearing gifts, including a pair of special dancing dolls. He presents a gift that resembles a menacing mouse, which is later banished from the room because Fritz behaves so mischievously with it. Drosselmeier, saving the best for last, presents Marie with the special Nutcracker that she so admired in his workshop earlier that day. Marie immediately falls in love with her wonderful gift. It seems that the Nutcracker was meant to be Marie's all along, and she begins to dance with the Nutcracker. Fritz, in a fit of jealousy grabs the Nutcracker from Marie and accidentally breaks it. Fortunately, Drosselmeier is able to repair the broken Nutcracker. The evening's festivities draw to an end as Marie's and Fritz's Grandparents lead the final dance of the evening. The guests depart into the night and the family retires for the evening, possibly to dream of tomorrow's Christmas day.





Scene 4: The Battle

With everyone asleep, Marie sneaks downstairs into the darkened parlor to search for her beloved Nutcracker. As the clock strikes midnight, feeling tired, Marie falls asleep on the daybed and slips into a vivid dream. In her dream, Marie is startled as a mouse steals her Nutcracker. The room appears to transform itself and the Christmas tree also seems to grow and grow before her very eyes. A fierce battle ensues between the giant mice and the toy soldiers. The Nutcracker challenges the Mouse King to a duel and with Marie's help, the Nutcracker fatally wounds the Mouse King. Magically, the Nutcracker is then transformed into a handsome prince who invites Marie to join him on an enchanted Journey.

Scene 5: Journey through the Land of the Snow

Marie and her Nutcracker Prince begin their magical journey through a swirling snowstorm.

ACT 2

Scene 1: The Journey to the Land of the Sugar Plum Fairy

Marie and her Nutcracker Prince continue their travels to the Land of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Scene 2: Marzipan Castle

Marie and The Nutcracker Prince arrive at Marzipan Castle where the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier live. Marie is astonished that the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier resemble the very dolls that Drosselmeier presented at the party. The Nutcracker Prince and Marie recount their tale of the fierce battle with the army of mice and the defeat of the ferocious Mouse King. The Sugar Plum Fairy announces a special celebration to honour the brave young couple.

Representatives with gifts from surrounding nations join the festivities, with chocolate from Spain, coffee from Arabia, tea from China, pastilles from France and from Russia, caviar. From New Zealand comes a garland of pōhutukawa blossoms, led by the shimmering Dew Drop. Finally, the most wonderful dance of all is danced by the Sugar Plum Fairy and her gallant Cavalier. As Marie and the Nutcracker Prince prepare to leave, each group of dancers return for one last farewell, as alas all dreams must come to an end. Or was it a dream?





A BRIEF HISTORY OF NUTCRACKERS!



Tools to crack nuts have been around for a long time. The earliest written reference to the tool seems to come from the 14th century. King Henry VIII gave a pair of nutcrackers to Anne Boleyn. Even Leonardo DaVinci expended some brainpower on the concept of how best to crack nuts – one solution he came up with was a large, horse-powered press.

Design and material varied wildly – brass crocodiles in India; cast-iron squirrels in England; even porcelain elsewhere in northern Europe. Wood was the most common material, and it's what German woodworkers in the Erzgebirge region turned to in the late 17th century when they began carving the earliest versions of the distinctive soldier-dolls we know today.

At first, these nutcrackers, often made in workshops alongside carved toys and puzzles, weren't specifically Christmas-themed and it's impossible to pin down precisely when they took on that seasonal significance. (Nuts and thus nutcrackers are a part of many holiday celebrations – Halloween in regions of Britain and Scotland was traditionally known as Nutcrack Night.)

The dolls symbolize good luck in German tradition – one popular origin myth says that farmer who wanted to speed up the process of cracking nuts offered a reward to whoever could come up with the best solution. Each villager drew on his own professional expertise – a carpenter advocating sawing them open, a soldier shooting them. But it

was the puppet-maker who won the day, building a strong-jawed, lever-mouthed doll.

German homes didn't typically have more than one nutcracker figure, so during tough economic times in the early 19th century, the region's toymakers took to the roads, selling their goods elsewhere in countries such as Russia, Poland and Norway. Demand increased, and by the 1870s, nutcrackers (among other wooden toys) were being produced commercially in factories.

Nutcrackers got their biggest boost when Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky adapted ETA Hoffmann's *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* for the ballet.

After World War II nutcrackers became a popular Christmas gift for American soldiers stationed in Germany to send home to their friends and family.



FUN FACT:
The Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum in the USA, has more than 7,000 nutcrackers.

<http://nutcrackermuseum.com/index.html>



PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

1840 – 1893 

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in Votinsk in 1840, one of the seven children of a middle class family with a tradition of military and government service. Although the young Piotr showed musical talent from an early age, being a musician was not considered a suitable career and it was decided that he should study law.

At the age of 10, he was sent to board at the Imperial Institute of Jurisprudence in St Petersburg, more than a thousand miles from home. While studying law became his focus, Tchaikovsky continued to study music and to learn the piano.

After three years working in a junior role at the Ministry of Justice he finally got his chance to study music formally when he joined the inaugural class of the St Petersburg Conservatory, under the directorship of Anton Rubinstein, in 1862.

On graduating in 1865, Tchaikovsky was appointed as Professor of Music Theory at the new Moscow Conservatory. By the late 1860s public performances of his works became more frequent and were generally well-received.

Tchaikovsky was greatly supported by the patronage of the wealthy Nadezhda von Meck, whose generosity over 13 years enabled him to devote his life to being a composer. Although he and his patron never met, Tchaikovsky and Von Meck exchanged more than 1,000 letters and they became intimate friends.

His works enjoyed favour at the Russian Imperial court, and he was awarded the Order of St Vladimir, as well as a hereditary title.



In 1885, he was granted a lifetime annual pension of 3,000 roubles.

In 1888 following the success of his ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*, Tchaikovsky began work on *The Nutcracker*. The original story, by ETA Hoffmann, was German, later adapted into French by Alexandre Dumas.

The Nutcracker is full of instantly-recognisable melodies. Scored for a large orchestra, including two harps and a large battery of percussion, including the toy instruments which appear in Act I, it is notable for being one of the earliest uses of the celesta which provides the sweet, bell-like music for the Sugar Plum Fairy.

The Nutcracker was premiered at the Imperial Theatre in December 1892 but critical and audience reaction was lukewarm and the ballet did not enter the regular repertoire of the Imperial Theatre and it was not until the 1920s that it was seen outside Russia, in an abridged version. A complete production was staged in England in 1934, but it was not until the 1940s, and in particular San Francisco Ballet's 1944 production, which started an annual tradition, together with George Balanchine's celebrated 1954 production for New York City Ballet, that *The Nutcracker* became a Christmas tradition in the USA and eventually, around the world.

THE CELESTE



The celeste (or celesta) was invented in 1886 by a Parisian harmonium builder, Auguste Mustel. It looks like a small upright piano, but instead of strings its hammers strike a graduated set of metal plates or bars suspended over wooden resonators. Its name celeste means heavenly in French and it has a delicate bell-like sound.

Tchaikovsky was one of the first major composers to use the celeste in his symphonic works and it has come to be strongly identified with *The Nutcracker* through its use in the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy.



FUN FACT:

The celeste has also been featured in pop music. Have a listen to *She's a Rainbow* by the Rolling Stones

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6c1BThu95d8>



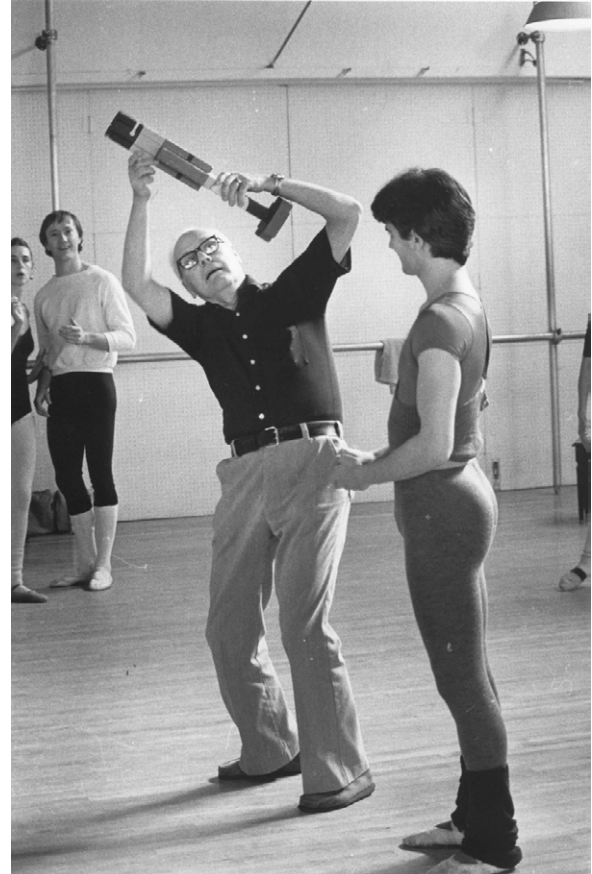


VAL CANIPAROLI AND THE NUTCRACKER

The Royal New Zealand Ballet is proud to have the world-renowned choreographer Val Caniparoli creating our new production of *The Nutcracker*. Val has had a long career as a dancer with the San Francisco Ballet in addition to creating over 100 productions for ballet, opera and theatre for over 50 companies around the world. Val talks to us about his career and *The Nutcracker*.

Val Caniparoli joined San Francisco Ballet in 1972 and his version of *The Nutcracker* is strongly influenced by what he learned there. San Francisco Ballet staged the first complete version of *The Nutcracker* in the United States in 1944. It was the first company to make the ballet an annual Christmas tradition, something that is now common in the US and around the world. Lew Christensen who created the version which Val is most familiar with, had a background in vaudeville.

Recreating a firm favourite might seem like a challenge. While there is only a fragment of the original choreography in existence from the first production in 1892 (the snowflakes scene), audiences over time have developed expectations of how the ballet should be. Val's production is inspired by this historical choreography.



LEW CHRISTENSEN COACHING VAL CANIPAROLI AS DROSSELMEYER IN HIS PRODUCTION OF THE NUTCRACKER. SAN FRANCISCO BALLET. (PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN) 1974



VAL CANIPAROLI AND ANITA PACIOTTI IN LEW CHRISTENSEN'S THE NUTCRACKER. SAN FRANCISCO BALLET. PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY SINICK. 1980



VAL CANIPAROLI IN REHEARSAL





Val believes that a clear story line is essential in staging a successful *Nutcracker*. Despite the darkness implied in the original story by ETA Hoffmann, he believes that audiences expect a lighter version full of seasonal festivity. The aim is to provide audiences with a joyful entertainment, looking at the world through children's eyes.

With his early training as a musician Val has a strong respect for the music he choreographs. He is careful that the composer's intentions should be respected, with cuts to the music being made only when absolutely necessary and in a sympathetic way. He believes that 'any music is danceable' opening the doors to endless possibilities when it comes to marrying music and dance together.

The new production will involve the largest number of child extras ever used in a Royal New Zealand Ballet production. Three hundred and fifty children from around the country are busy learning their roles as party-goers and mice. Every child extra has to be fitted with custom-made costumes and this has involved RNZB costumiers travelling around the country with their tape measures!



VAL CANIPAROLI AS DROSSELMEYER IN HELGI TOMASSON'S *THE NUTCRACKER*. SAN FRANCISCO BALLET. PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIK TOMASSON



SNOW SCENE IN VAL CANIPAROLI'S *THE NUTCRACKER*. ARTISTS OF LOUISVILLE BALLET. PHOTOGRAPHY BY WADE BELL. COSTUME AND SCENIC DESIGN BY PETER CAZALET



VAL CANIPAROLI IN REHEARSAL

Traditions vary around the world – sometimes the principal character is called Clara and sometimes (as in our production) she is called Marie, her name in the original 1892 version. Sometimes children take the roles of the toy soldiers, but here in New Zealand adult dancers have been cast in the roles. This is new to Val who has taken a while to get accustomed to having big toy soldiers rather than small ones!

Val's excitement as he describes his work is infectious and we can look forward to a truly memorable season of *The Nutcracker*.

SET AND VIDEO DESIGN

BY MICHAEL AUER

Set in Nuremburg, Germany in the mid 19th century, in the years between when ETA Hoffmann wrote the story and Tchaikovsky composed the ballet, RNZB's new production of *The Nutcracker* promises to be splendid and traditional. Michael Auer who has designed the set says we can expect a visual feast which is bright, fun and accessible. Using a subtle combination of physical elements and projections we will be transported from a middle class drawing room, through a snow storm and into a magical world of the wildest dreams of the young heroine, Marie.

There will be a magical sleigh bed and the traditional Christmas tree which grows before our very eyes, with the subtle use of technology enhancing the physical set.

Michael has drawn on his memories of the architecture of Vienna where he grew up and the influence of the Biedermeier style is strong in his designs. Biedermeier refers to a mood and a set of trends which arose in mid 19th century Europe, when urbanization and industrialization led to the growth of the middle class. It created a blossoming of furniture design and interior decorating with the focus on domestic felicity and comfort. The Stahlbaums' drawing room will be furnished in this style.

This is Val Caniparoli's fourth production of *The Nutcracker* and the second time he has collaborated with Michael Auer. Being familiar with Val's version of the storyline has assisted him greatly in creating the designs for the new production.

Projections have become an important feature of ballet sets in recent years and this is also the case with *The Nutcracker*. Having a strong background in technology, developing software and being involved in digital art production makes Michael a specialist in this kind of work, which enhances the physical set and the costumes and ultimately the entire audience experience.

Of course, by their very nature, fairy tales are not entirely logical and it requires us to use our imaginations to put 'real world' considerations aside. The skills of the designer create an environment that allows us to do exactly that.



CANNON

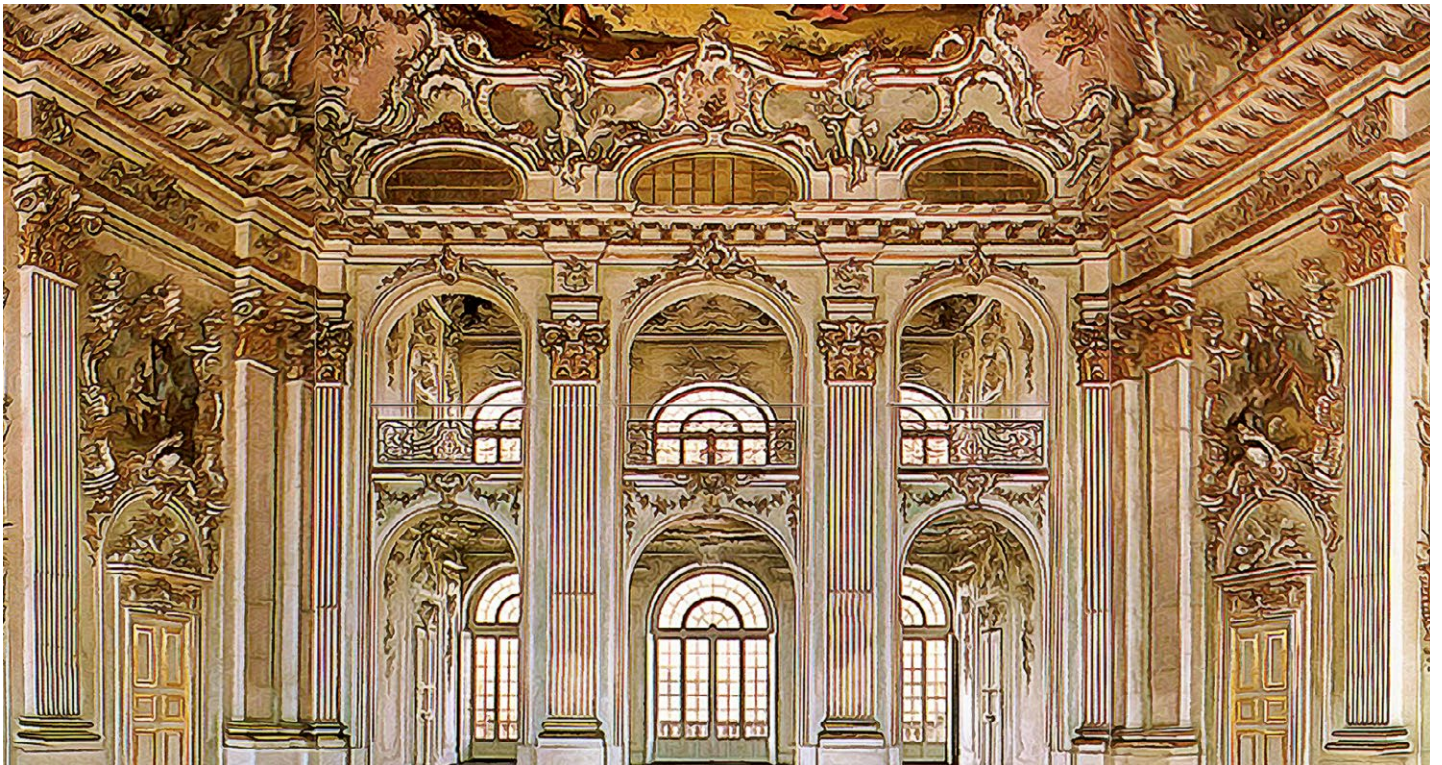




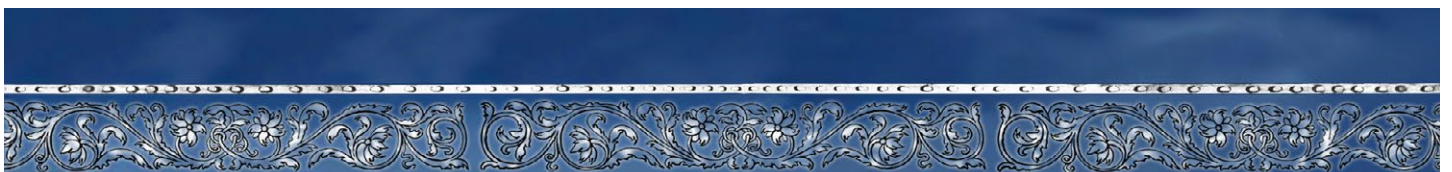
CLOCK DESIGN



SNOW EFFECTS



MARZIPAN DESIGN



SNOW BORDERS

LIGHTING CONCEPT

Jon has designed lighting for well over one hundred productions in the UK, Europe and Australia. A graduate of Croydon School of Art near London, UK, Jon worked initially for the Royal Shakespeare Company before becoming a freelance designer in 1997. Since then he has enjoyed a highly successful career lighting a varied array of works in all disciplines of the performing arts.

Jon was the Technical Director of West Australian Ballet in Perth from 2008 – 2015 where he designed lighting for all the major repertoire. During this time he has also designed lighting for Black Swan State Theatre Company, the Royal New Zealand Ballet and various other companies. In July 2015 he took up the position of Technical Director at The Australian Ballet. Since then Jon's engagements outside The Australian Ballet include relighting *La Fille mal gardée* and *La Bayadère* for Queensland Ballet, and *Don Quixote*, *Peter Pan* and *Dracula* for West Australian Ballet.



LIGHTING THE NUTCRACKER

My lighting concept starts from looking at the photos of the existing set pieces and then the designs for the new scenes. Basically, this is a new production, utilising video quite a lot to transition us from one scene to another. Lighting needs to support the scenery, the costumes and the video.

This happens to be my fourth *Nutcracker* so I am very familiar with the general story. As always though, different creative teams put different nuances in to the storytelling so whilst the story is the same, the way it's told is slightly different for most *Nutcrackers*.

Lighting wise, I know that we'll have an introduction to Drosselmeier. Sometimes he's a peculiar but much loved uncle, sometimes a magician, he's usually a toymaker (in the first version I did though in 2008, Drosselmeier was a very strict school headmistress!).

After that there's the Christmas party at the house of the Stahlbaums. This is usually where we get a sense of the period that our story is set. It's an evening party so the colours need to look warm and inviting, so that when the guests all leave at the end

JON BUSWELL
LIGHTING DESIGNER



of the night, it's not such a stretch of the imagination that the room falls quickly in to a night time – cool look.

The battle: This happens under the Christmas tree and most *Nutcrackers* will have a cool transition to get us to shrink and arrive under the tree. This *Nutcracker* is no exception! How I can help from a lighting perspective is to give a sense that the shadows are bigger and the lighting more directional because the smaller you get the bigger the lights get right?

Then the journey to the Land of Snow. This is my favourite part, to try to make the scene look cold. For this production we are using the latest in LED lighting so that we can dial up exactly the colours we need rather than starting from white and putting filters in front of the lights. What this means is that the light is the same level no matter what colour it is.

It's a pretty new technology and it's the first time I've used it to this extent.

With older lights the colour warms up as the light gets dimmer so it's sometimes hard to maintain that cold look.

Then, after the interval, we head to the Land of Sweets (sometimes called Marzipan) and here we meet the Sugar Plum Fairy and watch the variations of the different lands that have been travelled through to get there. This is a very special scene and has many of the tunes that will be familiar because a lot of them are played in their own right at Christmas.

Lighting for this will be colourful and bright for the big group dance scenes and for the travel variations, I will try to reflect colours of the lands that the dances reflect. Music plays an important role in influencing my colour choices.

The Nutcracker is always a fun show to do. The dancers enjoy dancing it, the orchestra enjoy playing it and the crew enjoy running the shows. I hope you all enjoy it too.

JON BUSWELL **LIGHTING DESIGNER**



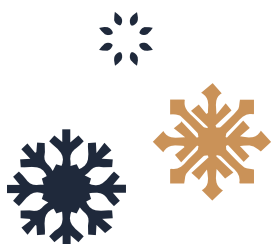
COSTUME DESIGNS

CREATED BY RNZB ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PATRICIA BARKER



Have a close look at the main characters' costumes.

ACT 1



LANTERN



THE NUTCRACKER



THE NUTCRACKER JACKET



MOUSE



ADULT PARTY
TUTU



SNOWFLAKE
TUTU



SNOWFLAKE
TIARA

ACT 2



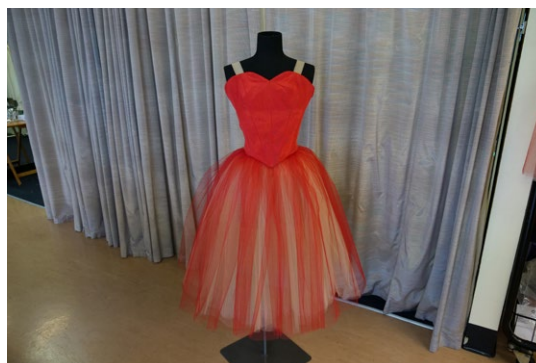
SUGAR PLUM MASK, TIARA AND TUTU



SPANISH HAIR PIECE



CAVALIER MASK AND JACKET



POHUTUKAWA TUTU AND HAIR PIECE

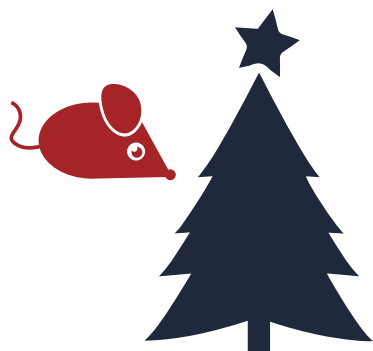
NUTCRACKER CRAFT ACTIVITIES

MAKING A MOUSE

MAKE A MOUSE TO HANG ON YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE

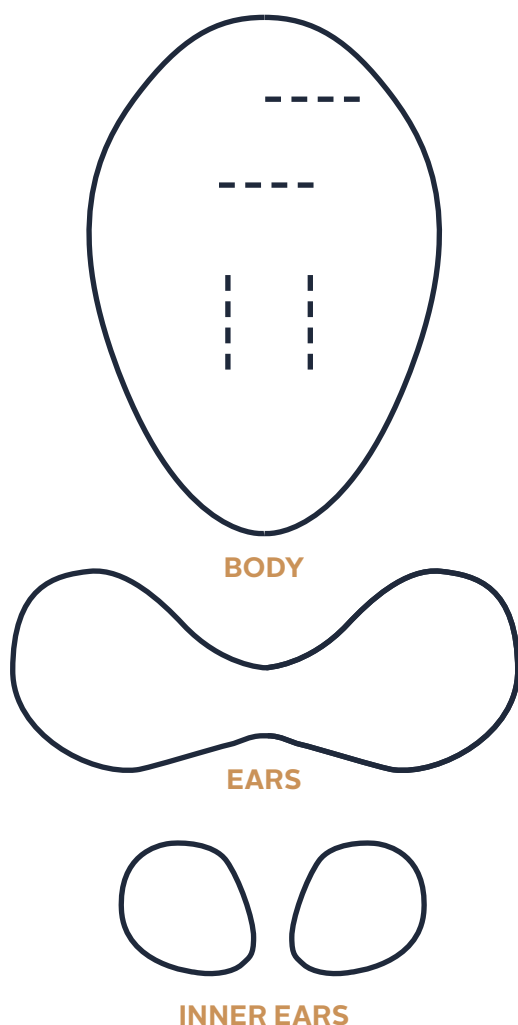
Materials:

- Felt of two different colours
- Glue
- Black felt pen
- Candy cane



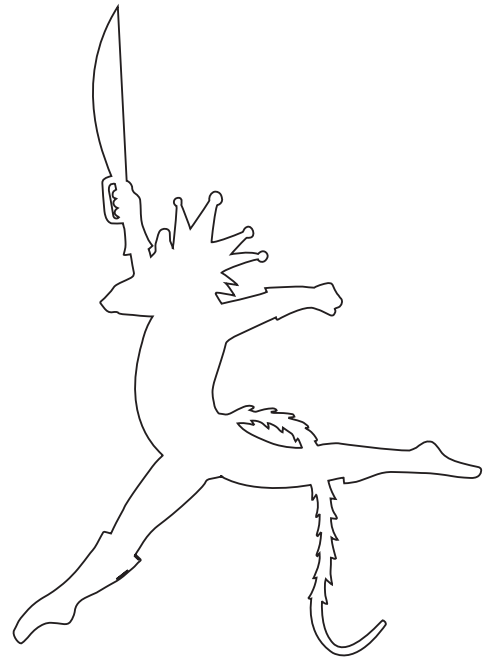
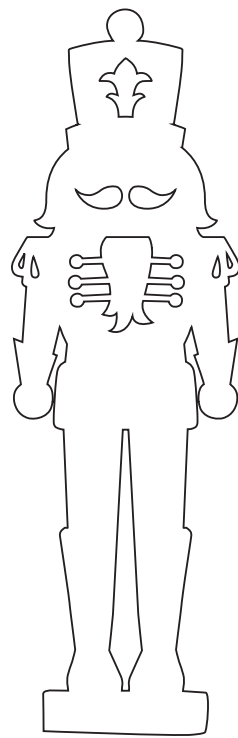
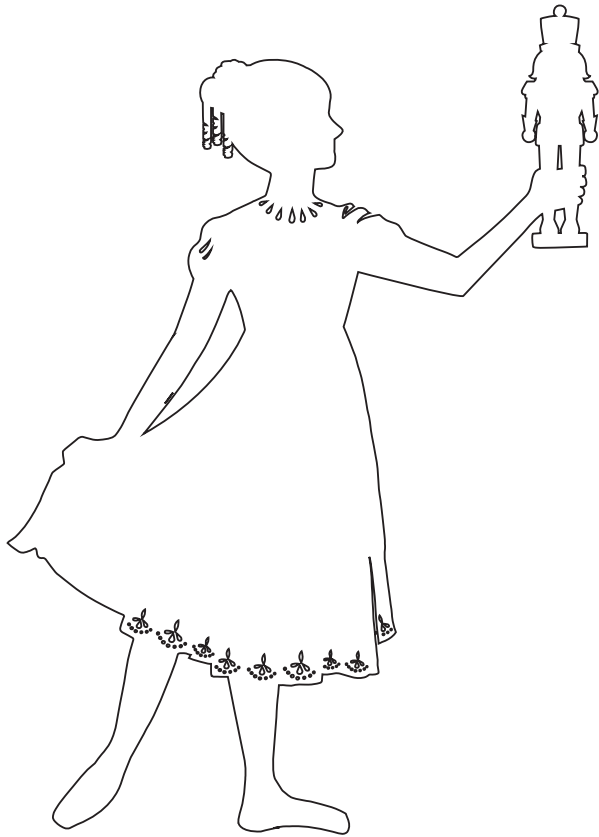
Instructions:

- Cut one body and one set of ears from felt (grey, white or brown are popular colours)
- Cut two inner ears from contrasting coloured felt (red or pink perhaps)
- Mark and cut the slots on the body as indicated on the pattern
- Slide the ears through the vertical slots
- Glue inner ears onto the ears
- Draw on eyes and whiskers (a 'Sharpie' black pen is good for this)
- Hold the candy cane under the mouse
- Thread the candy cane through the horizontal slots in the body and through the 'ear slots' as well, to secure it.



NUTCRACKER CRAFT ACTIVITIES

COLOURING IN



THE RYMAN HEALTHCARE SEASON OF

The NUTCRACKER



BALLET TIMELINE



1653 Louis XIV dances the Sun God in *Le Ballet de la Nuit*. His teacher, Pierre Beauchamps, formalises the terms we use as vocabulary in ballet today.

1661 Louis XIV (Sun King) founds the Académie Royale de la Musique, later named the Paris Opera Ballet.

1726–1727 Marie Camargo and her rival, Marie Salle, make debuts in London. Camargo shortens her skirt to show her feet, paving the way for the modern tutu.

1789 Jean Dauberval produces *La Fille Mal Gardée*, making it the oldest ballet still extant in modern-day repertoire.

1828 Marie Taglioni makes her debut at the Paris Opera, dancing on pointe for the first time.

1892 *The Nutcracker*, is premiered at the Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg, Russia, on Sunday 18 December

1890s Marius Petipa (1818–1910) choreographs the great classics of ballet including *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), *Swan Lake* (1895) and *Raymonda* (1898).

1900s Ballet companies visited New Zealand through the first half of the twentieth century including Adeline Genée, Anna Pavlova, Covent Garden and Russian Ballet.

1953 Poul Gnatt (1923–1995) founds the New Zealand Ballet (now RNZB).

1963 NZB's first production of *The Nutcracker* is staged by Russell Kerr, designed by Raymond Boyce

1984 The New Zealand Ballet Company becomes the Royal New Zealand Ballet

1998 The St James Theatre becomes the home of RNZB.

2013 The Royal New Zealand Ballet celebrates its 60th anniversary.

2017 Appointment of Patricia Barker – RNZB's 12th Artistic Director.



DANCE EXERCISES

The Nutcracker is a ballet full of wonderful characters and beautiful, dramatic scenes. There are so many characters that the ballet requires a full company to perform it – our Royal New Zealand Ballet production even has a whole cast of child dancers join us for scenes in both Act I and II! It can be lots of fun to dance together with a group in these big scenes, but it means that performers need to be very good at dancing in unison and canon. Let's discover some ways to work on these very important dance skills!

WARM UP: UNISON

Arrange your dancers in rows around five on the edge of the dance space. They should all be facing the same direction, towards the performance space, which will make one student the leader. Be sure to swap over leaders each time you try one of the following variations so that each student has the opportunity to lead the group. Without music, ask each line to walk across the space from one end to the other. They need to stay perfectly in line and cannot overtake each other in the line. Ask them to be very precise with this – their shoulders and heads should be directly in line with the person in front of them. Though walking is a basic human action, coordinating yourself to be in time with other bodies can be tricky for young dancers. Once you're more confident with staying together, leaders can move their line in any pathway throughout the room that they like. Options include:

- Moving in a straight line across the space
- Moving in a squiggly line throughout the room
- Adding sideways steps
- Add pauses, or stops, when your feet come to standing beneath you
- Trying different tempos and speeds

Now try this task using music that has a strong and clear beat that is easy to hear. Great music options from *The Nutcracker* Act I are the Gallop, March, Party Scene with presents from Drosselmeier, and the Battle Scene. Now ask your lines continue creating pathways through the room but they now need to stay in time with both the line and the music. This can be tricky and not all groups will manage it the first time around.

SKILLS TASK: UNISON

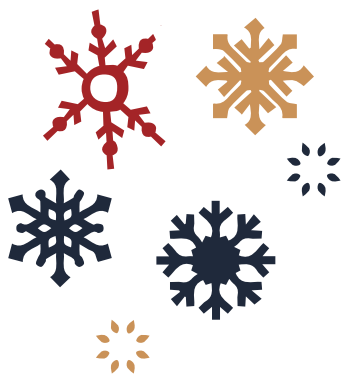
Let's keep developing our unison skills in these lines. Ask the leader of each group to begin walking across the space and begin to slowly using their arms to create movement patterns or shapes while everyone behind them copies their movements exactly. Following the leader can be a very difficult thing to do, so make sure the power of being leader doesn't go to your head and you don't move too fast for your line to keep up and stay in time with you! Let each dancer have a turn at being the leader, with the front dancer walking to the back of the line to changeover. Try this with different pieces of music, so that the different rhythms and styles can impact and affect your creative arm movements.

CHOREOGRAPHY TASKS: SNOWFLAKES

One of the most beautiful scenes in *The Nutcracker* is the snowflake scene, in which Marie and the Nutcracker Prince travel through the Land of the Snow to arrive at the Land of the Sugar Plum Fairy. The choreography features dancers travelling in and out of the stage, and in their white costumes the effect is that of dazzling snowflakes spinning through the air. Use the follow instructions to create your own Snowflake dance.

In your lines from before, ask each group to choose four or five of their favourite snow words from the list below:

Melt
Slushy
Blustery
Gentle
Drift
Driving
Ski
Snowball
Crunchy
Blowing
Blizzard



Ask the groups to turn each word into an action or movement that they will perform in their line. The movements they create need to locomote or travel because each group will journey across the dance floor performing each word-inspired step. For music, play Tchaikovsky's *Waltz of the Snowflakes* to create the feeling of a wintery wonderland snowscape.

- Each line needs to think about where they will enter and exit from every time they perform a new step
- Groups need to choose and remember the pathways and patterns that their line will travel through the space on
- Remind your dancers to include different dynamics and qualities in their movements

To make this task more complex, introduce the option for students to include the use of canon. Canon is a composition device in which dancers perform the same action or movement as each other, but start and end after one another. Canon can create beautiful effects and will be sure to turn your gentle snowdrift into a blustery snow flurry!

To put these together choose and order for your lines to enter and exit in. Groups can move one at a time or all at once, but you will want to practice this slowly to make sure there aren't any collisions if the pathways of different groups cross.

HERR DROSSELMEIER'S CHRISTMAS WORKSHOP

This is a simple and fun game to play with students to get them comfortable with creating shapes and sharing their ideas within a group. This game uses gestural shapes, focusing on using our hands and facial expressions to mime or describe objects.

Ask your class to sit in a circle and start the game off by passing an imaginary present to your left. One at a time, have your students perform unwrapping the gift, opening the box and pulling out an object that they need to describe with their hands or arms. Think about what you might like to receive as a Christmas gift? Herr Drosselmeier is a wonderful toymaker who can make any toy, so the only limit is your imagination. The objects can be anything your students can think of, good examples to start off with are a book, a cup of tea, binoculars, shoes, a ball, an ice-cream, or a violin. The student needs to show the purpose of the object, how heavy or light it is, how large or small it is, and how they hold or use it. When someone calls out the correct object, the student can put the object back into the box and pass the box on to the person to his or her left.

INTERNATIONAL FLAVOURS AND FLAIR

In Act II of *The Nutcracker*, Marie and the Nutcracker Prince arrive at Marzipan Castle where the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier live. To celebrate the adventures and arrival of the brave young couple, the Sugar Plum Fairy announces a special celebration in their honour. Representatives with gifts from surrounding nations join the festivities, with chocolate from Spain, coffee from Arabia, tea from China, pastilles from France and from Russia, caviar. From New Zealand comes a garland of pōhutukawa blossoms. The ideas below will help your dancers to choreograph their own dances exploring the different cultures, motifs and characters present at the

Marzipan Castle celebrations. Dividing your class into groups of around five or six, assign each group one of the following cultures to represent:

-  **Spain**
-  **China**
-  **France**
-  **Arabia**
-  **Russia**
-  **New Zealand**

Using the corresponding music from *The Nutcracker*, each group must create a dance that includes the following dance devices:

Travelling in character

Develop a way of walking into the space to start your dance that represents your country or culture. You can use this travelling step throughout your dance also.

Use your whole body to describe your special item or food

Each of the groups brings a different gift to the celebration that is special or unique to their culture. Describe or show this gift encompassing your whole body. Be creative and experiment with different body parts! Can you stir sugar into your Chinese tea by using your toe? Or, can you spread your Russian caviar onto toast by rolling on the floor?

Incorporate different dance styles

Each of the countries and cultures represented has their own dance tradition. Research your group to find out what the dance style from your country is and how they move. Learning dances from different parts of the world is a wonderful way to learn about different cultures.

Create a tableau

Using different levels, create a tableau (like a freeze-frame or photograph) of your group that represents your country.

Here are some ideas to get your groups started, but including and contributing students' own ideas and knowledge of other cultures and countries is very much encouraged!



	Spain	China	France	Arabia	Russia	New Zealand
Dance	Flamenco	Dragon Dance	Ballet	Belly Dance	Cossack Dance	Haka
Gift	Chocolate	Tea	Pastilles	Coffee	Caviar	Pōhutukawa
Cultural Image	Castanets	Fan	Bicycle	Camel riding	Matryoshka doll	Gumboots