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# PRESS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Gadsden, AL.* Experience all the magic of the holiday classic with original costume designs, dazzling scenery and a host of characters as the Downtown Dance Conservatory presents “The Nutcracker Princess.” This year, the performances will take place at the Mort Glosser Amphitheater due to this year’s social distancing guidelines due to the pandemic.

“We’ve literally had to leap every hurdle to continue our programs this year and keep this important tradition alive,” says DDC’s Artistic Director Linze McRae “Our recent production last July at the amphitheater was such a success, and we are grateful to have such a beautiful outdoor venue in our community.”

Tchaikovsky’s “Nutcracker” is one of the most widely performed ballet and musical scores in the world. DDC Artistic Director Linze Rickles McRae has taken inspiration from the original Marius Petipa choreography and story from E.T.A Hoffman by adding a Russian flair with an interesting twist on the origins and culture of the Nutcracker tradition.

Housed in the Hardin Center, the DDC has been the heart of the local classical ballet community for more than 17 years. The organization has collaborated, staged and hosted many Nutcracker productions. Its collaboration of “Le Casse Noix Moderne: The Modern Nutcracker” with the Etowah Youth Orchestras made two-year run, including a sellout production in New York.

The production also was nominated for the Goldstar Nutcracker Award as one of the top 50 most original Nutcrackers in the U.S.

The DDC also hosted, auditioned and staged the “Great Russian Nutcracker” for two seasons with the internationally recognized Moscow Ballet.

“The community agreed that with the quality of ballet students we are able to present, we could produce our own locally grown ‘Nutcracker’ with all the magic and glamour of the larger productions performed around the country,” McRae said.

The story begins with a Christmas Eve gathering at the Stahlbaum house. Marie and her little sister, Masha, enjoy the evening’s festivities when their mysterious godfather, Herr Drosselmeyer, arrives. As a famous toymaker, he brings his matryoshka dolls, his shepherdess dolls, and his little lamb doll to dance for all the children of the party.

Marie receives the most beautiful doll of all, a Nutcracker Princess. As the party grows late and the guests leave, Marie falls asleep under the tree with her beloved doll. She awakens at the chime of midnight to find the evil Spider Queen, Evilla Baba Yaga, and her army of spiders circling the room. She looks around to see that the room has grown and she now is the size of her toys.

Her brave Nutcracker Princess comes to life and a battle ensues, as the princess defeats the Spider Queen. She whisks Marie away to meet the Sugar Plum Fairy, queen of the Land of Sweets. Marie is met by frozen flurries to find herself in a magical land where the confectionery delights from all the corners of the world join in the dance to celebrate.

Dancers ages 7 to 12 from across the audition for the community youth cast each year. Those dancers perform alongside the upper school and principal soloists of the DDC.

Tickets are \$16 and are available at [www.culturalarts.com/box office/](http://www.culturalarts.com/box office/). Coolers, chairs, and blankets are welcome. Guests will have plenty of room to social distance under the stars and masks are required for everyone seven and older.

For more information on the DDC’s programs, visit [www.culturalarts.org](http://www.culturalarts.org).

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