

2025 Nutcracker Guide

Evening Show - Saturday, December 13, 5:00-7:15pm

Sensory-Friendly Show - Sunday, December 14, 11:00am-12:00pm

Afternoon Show - Sunday, December 14, 3:00-5:15pm

North River Ballet & Star Academy Present



December 13 & 14, 2025 | Sarasota Opera House

Sarasota Opera House

61 N. Pineapple Ave.

Sarasota, FL 34236

We are ecstatic to produce our third Nutcracker performance - and can't believe we will have over 115 performers!! This show has a bit of everything, with ballet, pointe, acting, magic, aerial, acrobatics, jazz, tap, and more. Please read through this entire show guide for details on everything regarding the performance, and let us know if you have any questions!

History of the Nutcracker:

The story for the Nutcracker Ballet was adapted from the book *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* written by E.T.A. Hoffman in 1816. In 1892 in Russia, the first performance of the Nutcracker was presented, with musical scores composed by Pyotr Tchaikovsky and routines choreographed by Marius Petipa. The first American performance of *The Nutcracker* was performed a few years later by the San Francisco Ballet on December 24th, 1944. The beginning of *The Nutcracker* as an American tradition is usually credited back to George Balanchine's 1954 production with the New York City Ballet. Balanchine adapted the ballet to fit the times in America and it began to find success. Just a few years later it became even more widely known to where it is now a beloved part of the American Christmas tradition.

Story of the Nutcracker:

The Party Scene: It is Christmas Eve at the Stahlbaum house. The Stahlbaums are hosting their annual Christmas party, welcoming the arrival of their family and friends. The children, Clara, Louise, and Fritz, are dancing and playing as they welcome their friends too. The party grows festive with music and dance as their Uncle Drosselmeyer arrives. He is a skilled toy maker and always full of surprises.

Drosselmeyer draws everyone's attention as he presents life-size dolls which dance throughout the party. The children begin to open gifts from him when Drosselmeyer presents a beautiful Nutcracker to Clara.

Fritz becomes jealous and, having a bit more spunk than a boy should have, grabs the nutcracker from Clara and promptly breaks it. Clara is heartbroken looking on as Drosselmeyer quickly repairs the Nutcracker with a handkerchief. As the evening grows late, the guests depart and the Stahlbaum family retires for the evening. Clara, worried about her beloved Nutcracker, sneaks back to the tree to check on him, falling asleep with him in her arms.

The Battle Scene: As the clock strikes midnight strange things begin to happen. Clara begins shrinking as her beautiful Christmas tree grows high above her. The toys around the tree come to life while the room fills with an army of mice, led by the fierce Mouse King. As the Nutcracker awakens, he leads his army of toy soldiers into battle with the mice. The Mouse King corners the Nutcracker and battles him one-on-one. The Nutcracker seems to be no match for the Mouse King. The Nutcracker and his army can go on no longer and are captured by the mice and their King. Clara makes a final daring charge throwing her slipper at the Mouse King, hitting him square on the head.

The Mouse King drops to the floor and the mice run away.

The Land of Snow: The Nutcracker turns into a Prince and takes Clara on a journey to the Land of Snow, an enchanted forest wonderland where they are welcomed by dancing snowflakes.

The Land of Sweets: The Prince escorts Clara to the Land of Sweets where they are greeted by the Sugar Plum Fairy. The Prince tells her about their daring battle with the army of mice and she rewards them with a celebration of dances including Mirlitons, Spanish Chocolate, Mother Ginger's Children, Russian Candy Canes, Arabian Coffee, Chinese Tea, Italian Pie, and Waltz of the Flowers.

As a finale, the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Cavalier dance a beautiful Pas De Deux.

The Dream Ends: Clara awakens from her dream and finds herself by her Christmas tree with her beloved Nutcracker.

Thank you for supporting our dancers, studio, & performance!

Important Dates & Schedules:

Subject to Change

December 6: Mandatory In-Studio Rehearsal

*Please wear black leotards, pink tights, & hair pulled back into a tight ballet bun
Dancers ages 9 and under will be able to play games in another studio with assistants while not dancing. Dancers are 10 and up may quietly watch the rehearsals or stretch in another studio.*

- 1:00–1:30 – Warm-Up
- 1:30–2:30 – Party Scene
- 2:30–3:30 – Battle Scene
- 3:30–4:30 – Finale (all performers)
- 4:30–5:15 – Kingdom of Snow
- 5:15–6:45 – Kingdom of Sweets
- 6:45–7:30 – Sugar Plum & Waltz of the Flowers

December 13: Show Day!

- 9:00–9:30 – Dancers ages 10+ arrive
- 9:30–10:00 – Warm up
- 10:00–10:45 – Act I Blocking
- 10:45–11:30 – Act II Blocking
- 11:30–12:00 – Dancers ages 9 & under arrive
- 11:30–12:15 – Meal Break for dancers ages 10+
- 12:30–3:30 – Dress Rehearsal
- 3:30–4:00 – Group Picture & Awards (might be earlier depending on rehearsal)
- 4:00–4:45 – Meal Break
- 5:00–7:15 – Showtime!
- Please clean up quickly to be off the premises by 8pm.

December 14: Show Day!

- 9:30–10:00 – Dancers in Sensory-Friendly Show arrive
- 10:00–10:45 – Warm up and run anything as needed
- 11:00–12:00 – Showtime!
- 12:00–12:30 – Meet the Dancers (select dancers only)
- 12:00–1:30 – Break for dancers in both shows
- 1:00–1:30 – Dancers not in Sensory-Friendly Show arrive
- 1:30–2:30 – Warm up and run anything as needed
- 3:00–5:15 – Showtime!
- Please clean up quickly to be off the premises by 6pm.

December 15–20: Holiday Fun Week! (classes as normal)

Hair for All Performers:

Tight, mid-level ballet bun with a middle part.

Ballet-Bun Instructional video:

[youtube.com/watch?v=7C9yAiBAuxl&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7C9yAiBAuxl&t=3s)

You will need hair ties, bun pins, bobby pins, hairnet, & hairspray.

If they have a hairpiece, it will go on the right side or top of the bun.

Hats will go right on top on head & need to be securely fastened.

Party Girls, Clara, & Louise - We will have a hairpiece for the girls this year! It will likely go around their bun, but we will keep you updated!

Make-Up for All Performers:

Ages 7 and under - Lipgloss & light blush preferred (they are welcome to wear red lipstick & mascara if they would like)

Ages 8 and up - Red lipstick, blush, neutral eyeshadow, black eyeliner, and mascara preferred (they can wear eyelashes if they would like)

Only nude or clear nail polish allowed!
Small earring studs may be worn as long as they match the costuming - otherwise no other jewelry should be worn.

Costume Rentals

Nutcracker costumes are rented from the studio to students for the show only. This fee is included in the all-inclusive tuition. Costumes will be tried on in class and most can take home in the weeks leading up to the show. Anyone with a balance on their account will not be able to take their costumes home. Props are not to be taken home.

Costumes not returned by January 30 will be subject to a \$35 late rental fee.

Costumes not returned by March 30 will be subject to a \$155 replacement fee.

Dancers must wear a nude leotard underneath costumes.

Tights & Shoes

Most routines will wear pink convertible tights (handed out with check-in at show) and pink ballet shoes. Please bring an extra pair of pink tights! A few routines may not need to wear tights as they will be wearing leggings or other full length pants.

Please remember that tights are meant to serve as the undergarments for the costumes - please no underwear or visible bras!

Items to Bring:

Provided at Check-in the Day Of the Show:

- Show T-Shirt
- Tights (if needed)

Costumes:

- Costume for EACH Routine
- Hair Piece (if costume came with one)
 - Skin-Colored Leotard
 - Dance Shoes (if needed)

Additional Items:

- Hair Ties, Bobby Pins, Hairspray, Hairnets
 - Make-Up
 - Additional Tights
 - Jackets/Sweatpants/Cover-Up
- Activities (if needed: books, puzzles, etc)
 - Water & Snacks

Ticketing:

Tickets will be available VERY soon!

Both evening & afternoon shows are EXACTLY the same with the SAME cast members.

ALL audience members that need a seat will require a ticket, regardless of age. Student tickets are for children ages 0-18 needing a ticket. All tickets & fees are nonrefundable.
Performers may not watch in the audience during the show.

Sensory Friendly Show:

This year we are offering an additional show on Sunday that is less than an hour long, will have house lights on, sounds lowered, and the ability for audience members to enter & exit the theater as needed. Only certain dancers will be performing in this show.

Performer Arrival & Check-In:

Please make sure to arrive on-time with hair & makeup ready to go. Performers will have a few minutes before rehearsal to change into their first costumes once they arrive.
All performers will need to enter through the courtyard and into the side door of the Opera House, and check-in with a volunteer. They will receive a bag with their show t-shirt and program, and be told where their dressing room is.

Parents of students ages 9 and under will also receive a ticket during check-in with their child's name on it. Please KEEP this safe.

Parents will need this to check their child out of the dressing room at anytime.

Kids ages 9 and under cannot leave the dressing room on their own.

Kids 10 and older should have a parent with them as they leave, but do not need to have a ticket to check-out. They should have a parent with them as they leave as well, but it is not required. Please make a plan with where to meet them during any breaks and after the show.

Dancers ages 10 and up will need to change quickly and go backstage as soon as they are ready to warm-up. Younger levels will need to stick together with their class leader and only go backstage or to the audience once they are all ready.

Dressing Room & Backstage Etiquette:

Only parents with children 9 years and under can stay in the dressing rooms. Parents are welcome to assist in checking their kids in before the rehearsal & show, but by warm-up time no other parents will be allowed in the dressing room. **No parents (except for volunteers) will be allowed backstage.** If you would like to be with your child the entire time of the rehearsal and/or show, you will need to volunteer as a class leader.

No food or drinks except water will be allowed backstage or in the dressing rooms. There is an outdoor courtyard which is a perfect spot to eat (there are some covered sections as well). All students will need to cover-up their costume or change before eating or drinking anything!

No pictures are allowed in the dressing rooms!!! If you would like to take pictures, please go just outside of the dressing rooms.

*Males are not allowed in any female dressing room. Females are not allowed in the male dressing room.
We can assist in showing your child where to go if needed.*

Dress Rehearsal & Show Time:

All performers will need to stay either backstage, in the dressing rooms, or with their class leaders during the entire rehearsal & show. Parents are welcome to sit in the general admission area during the rehearsal.

Please note the rehearsal is not a time to bring guests to see the show - only one person per student is allowed to watch the rehearsal.

Performers may not leave the premises during the show days. You will need to check them out with their class leader before taking them out of the dressing room area to eat (only those over 10 years old may leave on their own).

Finale Fun:

The finale will be required of all performers. We will learn the finale piece all together during the mandatory rehearsal on December 6.

Performers will need to stay in their last costume unless told otherwise.

Pick-Up Information:

Dancers over 10 years old will be allowed to leave the backstage/dressing room area themselves with their ticket, although parents are still encouraged to pick them up. Please make a plan if you will meet them in the dressing room, auditorium, lobby, or anywhere else after the show or during any breaks.

If your child is 9 years old or under, you will need to pick them up from the dressing room with the ticket received when you checked them in.

Performers will need to change out of their costumes (and preferably into nice outfits). Check to make sure they are not leaving any costume or dancewear pieces behind before leaving the dressing room area.

Costume Rental Return:

All costume pieces should be returned to the front desk at the studio by January 30 at the latest. Please do not wash the costumes without approval.

Costumes not returned by January 30 will be subject to a \$35 late rental fee.
Costumes not returned by March 30 will be subject to a \$155 replacement fee.

Show Photos & Videos:

We will have professional photography and videography of our shows - which is included with your all-inclusive tuition! Please refrain from taking any photos or videos during the performance (during the rehearsal is alright). As soon as they are available after the show, we will send out links with digital copies to download & share. :)

Theater Etiquette:

This is a formal show in a beautiful and historic theater. We expect all audience members to represent our studio well. Please no talking during the show. Keep electronic usage to an absolute minimum. Food & drinks are not allowed inside the theater. Clapping after performances is absolutely welcome, but please no yelling until the end of the show. Once the show begins, please try to only leave the theater during intermission, although doors will quickly open in between routines if needed. If the show is in progress and you need to enter the theater, you may not be allowed to sit in your seat - make sure to arrive promptly!

Parking:

There are plenty of places to park near the Opera House. Please visit sarasotaopera.org/parking for a detailed map of all options!

Sensory-Friendly Show Performers

Party Scene:

Clara - Avana Dempsey

Fritz - Greyson Ulstad

Louise - Zoe Rio

Maids - Lillian Clevenger, Bailey Blanchard, Kaila Richardson, Emea Richardson

Mr. Stahlbaum - TBD

Mrs. Stahlbaum - TBD

Party Boys (*optional*) - Jaxon Eaton, Kaylen Kinard, Mariana Kinney

Party Girls (*optional*) - Alexah Burge, Maylee Ruta, Mallory Brendel, Ella Radcliffe,

Melina Martinez, Rosie Donohue, Amelia Copeland

Uncle Drosselmeyer - Mackenzie Clark

Ballerina Dolls - Gigi Bettle, Madison Fowler, Ellie Biggers, Matisyn Settle

Tapping Toy Soldier - Keeva Bippen

Battle Scene:

Nutcracker/Prince - Jaxon Eaton

Mouse Queen - Madison Fowler

Kingdom of Snow:

Snow Flurries Lead - Riley Greenlee

Icicles - Matisyn Settle, Madison Fowler, Riley Greenlee, Ally Harper, Alexis Eaton,

Kalynn DeVito, Kalia Early, Stephanie Greindl, Thais Sarmento

Snowflakes - Bailey Blanchard, Mallory Brendel, Aubree Clark, Kaylen Kinard,

Tessa Pizarro, Kaila Richardson, Emea Richardson

Snow Queen - Ella Roark

Kingdom of Sweets:

Spanish Chocolate: Stephanie Greindl

Arabian Coffee Acrobats - Greyson Ulstad, Ellie Biggers, Gigi Bettle,

Payson Gier-Pertessis, Ella Roark, Madison Fowler, Lillian Clevenger

Sugar Plum Fairy: Katie Borton

Lead Petals - Avana Dempsey, Matisyn Settle

Prince - Jaxon Eaton

Flowers - Gigi Bettle, Ellie Biggers, Alexis Eaton, Madison Fowler, Zoe Rio,

Ella Roark, Madalyn Wilkening

Dew Drop Fairy - Kalynn DeVito

Finale

Volunteers Needed!

We need 30+ volunteers to make the show run smoothly.

Volunteers can be anyone ages 13+ as long as they are responsible & willing to work.
Performers cannot volunteer for this show.

You may request certain roles/days within the volunteer form, but there is no guarantee as we need to make sure all spots are filled and that we don't have too many volunteers in one area.

**All volunteers will be able to receive a comp ticket,
show t-shirt, OR meal at the show.**

**Class Leaders & Backstage Runner/Dressing Room Assistant may be
able to watch parts of the show from backstage.**

Types of Volunteers Needed:

- Class Leader (Dec 13 10:30am-7:15pm; Dec 14 needed 12:00-5:15pm): This volunteer will be in charge of a class or group of classes, and make sure they are ready to perform as well as walk them to the backstage area & back to the dressing room.
- Backstage Runner/Dressing Room Assistant (Dec 13 9:30am-7:15pm; Dec 14 1:00-5:00pm): This volunteer will assist in anything needed backstage as well as in the dressing room.
- Performer Check-In (Dec 13 8:30am-12:15pm; Dec 14 12:15-1:45pm): This volunteer will check-in all performers.
- Door Security (Dec 13 8:30am-7:30pm; Dec 14 9:00am-5:30pm; varying time slots available): This volunteer will be security for the side door and make sure all performers or parents have their ticket to leave the backstage/dressing room area.
- Performer Pick-Up (Dec 13 6:30-7:45pm; Dec 14 4:30-5:45pm): This volunteer will assist in the pick-up process in the dressing room and make sure the dressing rooms are clean once everyone has been picked up.

**Visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A44ACAB22AAF58-59607623-nutcracker>
to Sign-Up to be a Volunteer!**



Performance Flowers

Purchase flowers for your performer & pick them up right at the show!

Single Rose with Ribbon - \$5

3 Rose Bouquet - \$15

6 Rose Bouquet - \$25

12 Rose Bouquet - \$35

Personal Note with Flowers - Additional \$5

Flowers are only sale online through December 1. We will have a few bouquets available at the show, but it is best to purchase ahead!

Visit StarAcademyFL.com/events/nutcracker-flowers to order.



Show Teddy Bears

All performers will want this adorable teddy bear with a matching recital t-shirt!

\$20 each

Teddy Bears will be available to purchase online through December 1.



Purchase yours at staracademyfl.com/events/nutcracker-bears.

Personalized Nutcracker Ornaments



Order your dancer a personalized ornament!

\$30 each

Ornaments will be available to purchase online through November 15.

Order yours at staracademyfl.com/events/nutcracker-ornament.

2025 Nutcracker Program Ads

*Give your performer a special spot
in our show program!*

**Offer a congratulatory message with a picture(s) for
your favorite dancer in our show program.**

Full Page - \$215

Half Page - \$175

Quarter Page - \$85

Shout Out (25 words only) - \$25

Purchase yours at [staracademyfl.com/events/
nutcracker-program-ads](http://staracademyfl.com/events/nutcracker-program-ads)



*Complimentary
ad design
included in price!*

Ad Deadline:
November 5

*Ads designed by
Michele Slaughter
Designs.*

