

Nutcracker Opens with Cast of Hundreds

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Ten-year-old Lacey Nugent tries on her costume during rehearsal for this weekend's Nutcracker ballet. Lacey portrays a Chinese Tea dancer in Act II. (Cheryl Nugent photo)

Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Every three years, dozens of dancers take the stage at the Gerald C. Wilson Auditorium for what has truly become a Kodiak tradition. The local production of the Nutcracker ballet began more than 20 years ago, and this year community members will once again get an opportunity to watch the magical journey of Clara and her Nutcracker Prince.

Molly Brodie owns the Little School of Dance, where most of this year's Nutcracker dancers take lessons. Brodie was also charged with directing the performance this year.

"Oh I think it's going to be a really good show. And there's probably more younger dancers in it than ever before. And there's some adults from the community are in it also, which is always enjoyable to see."

Brodie said one of the best parts of the show is seeing how far many of the dancers have come in the years between performances.

"It is always fun to see the kids in the Nutcracker because some of them, they were first in the Nutcracker when they were three years old. And they've been looking forward to this their whole life if they've continued in dancing in wanting to become the Sugar Plum Fairy or the Snow Queen and so it's quite a motivation for the dancers to improve and stick with it and get to be one of the major roles in the Nutcracker."

This year's show will open on December 6 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium. It will also show on Saturday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets are available through the Kodiak Arts Council's website and cost between \$20 and \$25.

Brodie said there are more than 200 kids in the show, in addition to the adults that will be performing. This year's show will feature two guest dancers from out of town. Nickolai Morschakov brings years of experience in Russian and American ballet companies to Kodiak's Nutcracker as one of the lead male dancers for the production. Morschakov has performed in Kodiak's ballet in past years and even spent a summer as a set net fisherman in Uganik. This year he will be accompanied by Alexey Kondratyuk, a fellow professional dancer.

Brodie wasn't around during the first performance more than 20 years ago, but said relics from those original shows are still present today.

“And there was a huge effort from a lot of people in the community who made the sets and lots of the props and things that are still used today. And it started out they did it two years in a row and then they decided that was too many years in a row and so they decided to do it once every three years. And so now we are operating from the same general principle of doing the Nutcracker using local dancers and guest dancers for the lead roles, for the males.”