

RIO GRANDE VALLEY BALLET PRESENTS:

The Nutcracker

Deborah Case, Artistic Director

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THE
RAUL TIJERINA JR.
FOUNDATION

2026

OUR 54rd ANNIVERSARY YEAR!

*I*t's Christmas Eve and Mayor Stahlbaum and his wife prepare for their annual Christmas party. Excited guests make their way to the mayor's house as the children enjoy the snow and chill outside the city.

Inside the Stahlbaum's house, Clara and Fritz are impatiently waiting to be allowed into the parlor where their parents entertain guests-and where presents are waiting. Their godfather, Uncle Drosselmeyer, attends the party each year, and always brings surprises!

Uncle Drosselmeyer is an eccentric doll maker. He is always inventing new mechanical toys and has prepared a special treat for this year's party. First he demonstrates his newest mechanical dolls: A Boy Doll, a Dancing Girl Doll, and a brave looking Soldier Doll. Finally, he presents his god-children with a doll made for cracking mounds of traditional Christmas nuts, The Nutcracker. The children are thoroughly delighted by this wooden soldier until Fritz, cheered on by his mischievous friends, breaks the toy. Clara is devastated, but Uncle Drosselmeyer repairs the lovely Nutcracker and leaves it to Clara's care. Clara returns to the ballroom to see that the new Nutcracker toy is still safe. As the clock's bell pronounces midnight, strange things begin to happen: hungry mice are closing in, walls disappear, her bed is moving through the house-the Christmas tree is growing in the parlor-and so is she! Clara is frightened by the mice, and runs to protect the Nutcracker doll, but discovers the Nutcracker is growing, too. The Nutcracker calls upon Fritz's toy soldiers, now also grown, to battle the mice. Clara helps the Nutcracker defeat the mice and the wicked Mouse King.

The Nutcracker has been liberated through her courageous defeat of the Mouse King and turned into a Prince. He takes her away to his kingdom, surrounded by the dancing snowflakes and led by their Snow King and his Queen. After a long voyage, Clara and the Nutcracker Prince arrive at the gates of the Kingdom of Sweets, greeted by angels.

The Sugar Plum Fairy then summons countless representatives of different nations, representing a wide range of sweet and delicious delicacies. After the festivities of the sweets and dancing, the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier perform virtuoso dances in Clara's honor. Listen for the special sound of the celesta, a new instrument for which this is the first know piece composed.



RIO GRANDE VALLEY BALLET DANCERS TRAIN AT

DEBORAH CASE DANCE ACADEMY

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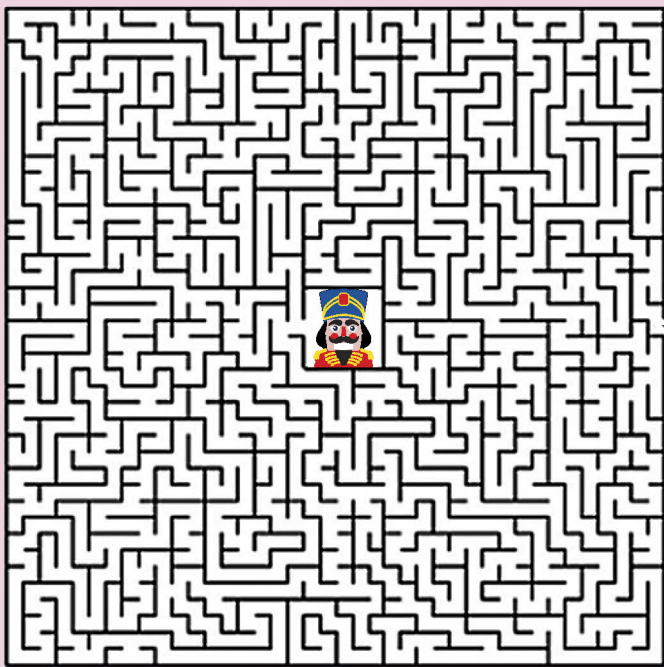
OK, But what makes **BALLET** so GREAT??

Look at it this way ... it's good to be able to move quickly. But it's a lot better to be able to move quickly and be in total control of where you're going and how you can get there!

Did you know that almost all professional football teams have their players take time to study and learn ballet moves? You won't find the players wearing leotards and tutus, but they are very happy to get training that helps them be better athletes on the field.

Sure, it looks pretty easy - you go in an air conditioned dance studio and spend an hour bending and stretching and sometimes leaping - no big deal, right? Well, try it! You'd be surprised to find how hard the lessons can be, and that the students are usually just as sweaty and tired after a class as any football or basketball player in the world. The big thing is that they have to maintain total control over every little movement to learn the art of dance. And any dancer of any style of dance will tell you that ballet training makes them better at any form of dance, from jazz and hip hop to swirly ballroom dancing.

When you see the dancers of The Nutcracker, think about the many weeks, months, and even years they have been practicing to reach their level of performance. It takes a lot of dedication, and giving up some fun things, to reach for your dreams, whatever those dreams happen to be! We really do hope you will find your own dreams and love living them as much as we do!



Can you help Clara find the Brave Nutcracker Prince?
why, you're a-maze-ing!

Clara needs to find The Nutcracker Prince before the evil Mouse King finds her! If she gets to the Nutcracker in time, she'll be safe and get to visit the Land of Sweets!



But if the Mouse King finds her first, things won't be very nice at all! The Mouse King would probably make her eat a lot of dry, hard cheese and some old stale cracker crumbs instead of things like chocolate and ginger snaps and lollipops in the Land of Sweets.

Even worse, though, is our show of The Nutcracker would end way too early, and all the work we've put into learning the great dances we have to show you would be wasted!

We're counting on you to help!

Every year, since 1972, Rio Grande Valley Ballet offers students matinee performances of The Nutcracker to all students in the Rio Grande Valley. Each year we see 7,500 school children come to our shows at the McAllen Performing Arts Center.

This 49th Anniversary season, we will have entertained over 450,000 students! The Nutcracker meets all theatre requirements with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the valley's students.

**Thank you Tijerina Foundation,
for allowing us to continue serving
the students in the Rio Grande Valley.**

