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**HOUSTON BALLET CELEBRATES THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF
STANTON WELCH'S THE NUTCRACKER**

Houston's holiday tradition returns to the Wortham Theater Center with a spectacular production featuring more than 400 performers and a 39-foot Christmas Tree.

HOUSTON, TEXAS — October 12, 2026 — Houston Ballet will bring holiday magic to life this season with *The Nutcracker*, running November 27 through December 28, 2026, at the Wortham Theater Center. This season marks the 10th anniversary of Artistic Director Stanton Welch AM's grand production, which the Company premiered in 2016.

A cherished Houston tradition for generations, *The Nutcracker* will welcome over 70,000 patrons across 37 performances throughout the holiday season, along with three student matinees that will bring over 2,200 students, teachers, and chaperones.

"*The Nutcracker* is a tradition that belongs to Houstonians," said Welch. "What makes this production particularly special is the community of dancers, students, technicians, artists, musicians, and families who come together to make every show extraordinary. Ten years after its debut, I continue to love seeing Clara's imagination come alive onstage and watching a new generation of young dancers experience the magic of *The Nutcracker*."

Welch's exuberant interpretation of the classic ballet transforms Clara's world into a dreamscape filled with larger-than-life characters and dazzling theatrical spectacle. The production features lavish designs by Tim Goodchild, created specifically for the dimensions of the Wortham Theater Center stage. The sets were custom built by a highly skilled team of 67 technicians, and features five scene changes throughout the performance.

The production features 45 human characters and 237 fantasy characters. Artistic Directors Julie Kent and Stanton Welch, Houston Ballet Academy Director Jennifer Sommers, ballet masters, and academy instructors will lead more than 400 performers throughout the month-long run, including 61 Houston Ballet company dancers, 285 Houston Ballet Academy students, and 56 community children.

Tchaikovsky's iconic musical score will be brought to life by the 61 members of the Houston Ballet Orchestra, led by Music Director & Chief Conductor Simon Thew and Guest Conductors Richard Bado and Ermanno Florio. A rotating ensemble of ten women perform the soaring, melismatic vocal line that accompanies the Waltz of the Snowflakes, adding another layer of magic to one of the production's most memorable moments.

Past performance images [here](#).

A Nutcracker for Everyone

On December 18 at 1 p.m., Houston Ballet will offer a Sensory-Friendly performance of *The Nutcracker*, a full-length production thoughtfully adapted to create a welcoming environment for individuals with sensory sensitivities, physical or cognitive disabilities, and their families.

Gentle production adjustments—including relaxed lighting, open theater doors, and supportive resources—allow audiences to experience the wonder of Houston Ballet's holiday classic in a more comfortable environment. Audience members are welcome to make noise or step out of the theater as needed, while quiet areas and activity spaces are available for those who need a break. Trained volunteers will also be on hand to support audiences throughout the experience.

Tickets and Productions

Performances of *The Nutcracker* will take place November 27–December 28, 2026, at the Wortham Theater Center. The production runs approximately two hours, including a 25-minute intermission. Tickets range from \$35-\$255, with family-friendly pricing available on designated value days, can be purchased at houstonballet.org or by calling 713.227.ARTS (2787). A VIP Green Room experience, featuring refreshments and photo opportunities, is also available for select performances.

***The Nutcracker* by the Numbers can be found [here](#).**

Ten Years in Pictures

To mark the anniversary, Houston Ballet will release *The Nutcracker*, a commemorative coffee table book celebrating a decade of Welch's *The Nutcracker*. The book takes readers behind the curtain of one of Houston's most beloved holiday traditions, from the craftsmanship of its costumes and sets to the dancers, students, and artists who bring Clara's world to life each season. The book features photography by Tiffany Campbell, a former Houston Ballet Academy Student.

"As they get older, these students often evolve from one role to another, one costume carrying a decade of growing dancers. We focused these portraits on our Academy students because nowhere is that growth more visible than in the thousands of students who've passed through this wardrobe over the past ten years, quite literally growing into what previous classes once wore," said Executive Director Sonja Kostich. "Preserving the costumes is essential to keeping this tradition alive."

Copies of *The Nutcracker* will be available for \$49.99 at the Houston Ballet Nutcracker Market and at the Houston Ballet Shop. During the run, audiences can find the book at a front-of-house Houston Ballet Shop. Tiffany Campbell will be at the Wortham Theater Center signing books during the December 5th and 6th performances of *The Nutcracker*.

About Houston Ballet

Founded in 1969, Houston Ballet is one of the nation's leading ballet companies — an artistic force and an important business leader and partner in the Houston region — inspiring audiences through artistic excellence, bold choreography, and a commitment to the future of dance. Under the artistic leadership of Artistic Directors Julie Kent and Stanton Welch AM and the chief administrative leadership of Executive Director Sonja Kostich, the Company is home to the Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance, the largest professional dance facility in the country. Houston Ballet operates with a \$47 million annual budget (FY27) and a \$139 million endowment (as of June 2026), presents a diverse repertory of classical and contemporary works, and tours internationally with a global reach spanning 116 countries.

Houston Ballet Academy serves as a leading pipeline for emerging dance talent, training more than 1,000 students each year — nearly half of whom receive scholarships. Through complementary Education and Community Engagement programs, the Company reaches more than 60,000 people annually, expanding access to dance across the Houston region.

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