




*The Jacksonville Symphony's*

FIRST COAST  
*Nutcracker*

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Credit Union



# The Nutcracker

*The Nutcracker* is a classical ballet in two acts, based on E.T.A. Hoffman's fairy tale called *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, written in 1816.

It was first presented at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, on December 17, 1892.

The music was written by Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and the original choreography was by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov, with scenario by Marius Petipa.

This year's *Nutcracker* is based on choreography by George Balanchine and Lev Ivanov.



# What IS a Nutcracker?

A nutcracker is a decorative figurine that can crack nuts with its mouth.

Its design is modeled after a German soldier.

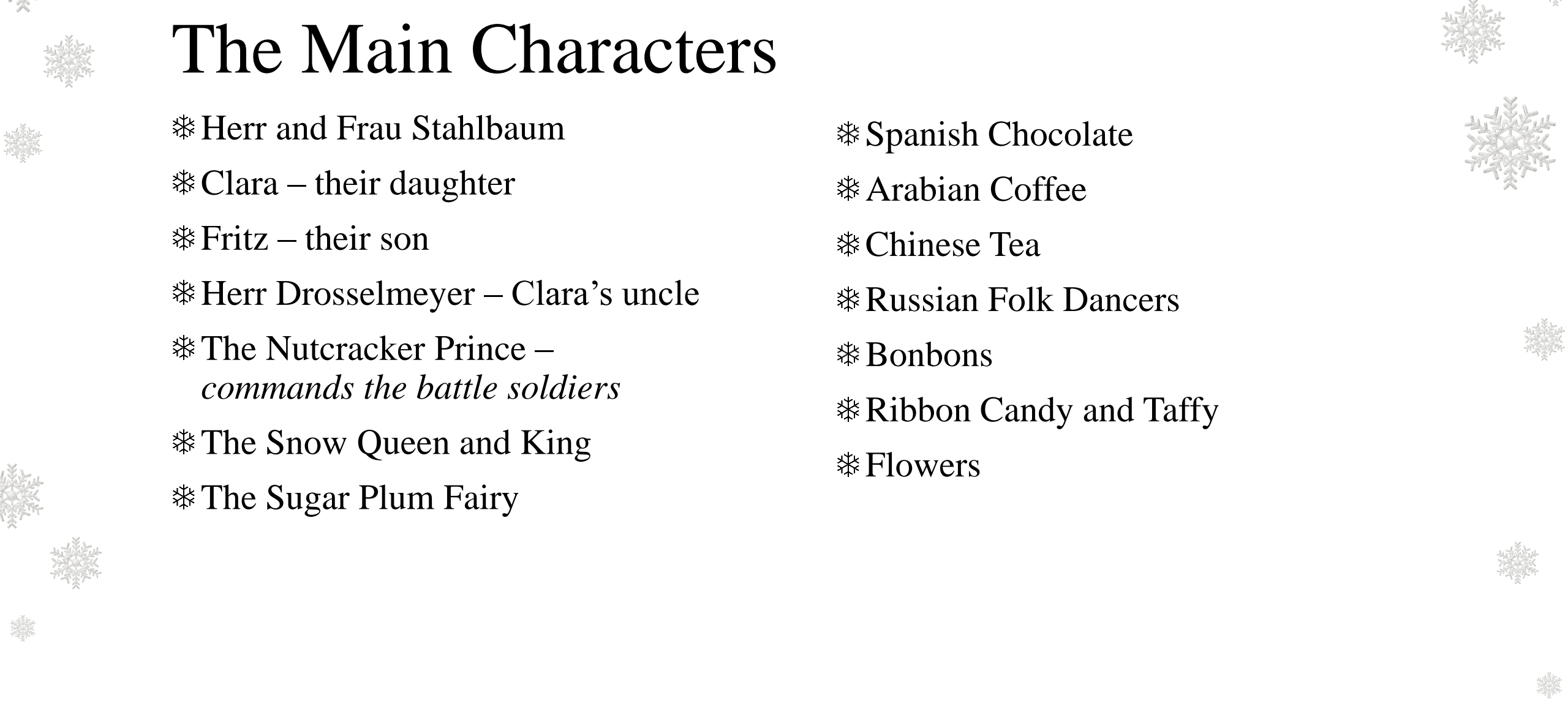
In German tradition, a nutcracker is considered to be good luck and serves as a protector of the house.







# The Main Characters

- ❖ Herr and Frau Stahlbaum
  - ❖ Clara – their daughter
  - ❖ Fritz – their son
  - ❖ Herr Drosselmeyer – Clara’s uncle
  - ❖ The Nutcracker Prince –  
*commands the battle soldiers*
  - ❖ The Snow Queen and King
  - ❖ The Sugar Plum Fairy
  - ❖ Spanish Chocolate
  - ❖ Arabian Coffee
  - ❖ Chinese Tea
  - ❖ Russian Folk Dancers
  - ❖ Bonbons
  - ❖ Ribbon Candy and Taffy
  - ❖ Flowers
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# Prologue

On a snowy night, skaters enjoy the frozen pond and the **Stahlbaum's** party guests happily stroll through the crisp air to their beautifully decorated home where a magnificent tree stands in the center of the room.





# Act I, Scene I: The Christmas Eve Party

The Stahlbaum's friends have gathered in their parlor and the children have received their Christmas gifts. They are so happy and begin to dance, the boys flashing their swords and the girls playing with their new dolls.

**Clara** is the happiest of all.

A sudden silence announces the arrival of the most mysterious guest of all, **Uncle Drosselmeyer**, who has brought the most wonderful mechanical toys and enchants all the guests with his magic tricks.





# Act I, Scene I: The Christmas Eve Party

The children sit and Uncle Drosselmeyer brings in three enormous boxes, each revealing a marvelous doll that appears to come to life.

The final gift is especially for Clara – a large doll in a military uniform with a jaw so strong it can crack nuts. A **Nutcracker**!



# Act I, Scene I: The Christmas Eve Party

Clara loves the doll at once, but her brother **Fritz** is jealous of her gift and breaks the Nutcracker.

Uncle Drosselmeyer comes to the rescue and places the broken Nutcracker under the tree, which he explains is magical and will keep it safe.

Clara gets ready for bed. She tiptoes back to the parlor to visit her Nutcracker and keep him safe, then falls asleep under the great tree.

The adventure begins!





# Act I, Scene II: The Battle

At the stroke of midnight, Uncle Drosselmeyer suddenly appears and the Christmas tree miraculously grows and grows until it fills the entire room.

Large rats fill the room, taunting and teasing Clara and her Nutcracker. **The Rat King** summons his army of rat soldiers.

Clara is terrified but Drosselmeyer's magic brings the Nutcracker to life. He springs to his feet and gathers the toy soldiers, who take out their swords and join the Nutcracker in his fight against the Rat King and his army.



# Act I, Scene II: The Battle

Clara sees this horrible fight and wants to help. She picks up her candlestick and throws it at the Rat King with all her might. He collapses and his army is defeated.

The Nutcracker and the toy soldiers are victorious and the Rat King's spell over the Nutcracker is broken.

Suddenly he is transformed into a handsome **Prince**.





# Act I, Scene III: The Land of Snow

Clara and the Prince find themselves in a beautiful snowy forest.

Snowflakes begin to dance and Clara dreams that she is the **Snow Queen**.

She and the Prince dance and board an enchanted sleigh that will transport them to the Land of Sweets.



# Act II, Scene I: To the Kingdom of Sweets

Little angels, led by the Christmas Spirit, light the way for Clara and the Nutcracker Prince to travel to the Kingdom of the Sweets.





# Act II, Scene II: The Kingdom of Sweets

As a gift for saving them from the Rat King, the toy dolls from the Kingdom of Sweets show their appreciation by dancing for Clara.

First, the beautiful **Spanish Chocolate** dolls perform a fiery dance. The exotic **Arabian Coffee** dolls appear next with their mesmerizing music and acrobatic tricks. The **Chinese Tea** dolls are lively and happy.





# Act II, Scene II: The Kingdom of Sweets

Two **Harlequin** dolls take center stage, surrounded by **Ribbon Candy** and **Taffy**, followed by **Russian** dolls doing a traditional folk dance. **Mother Ginger** and all her little **Bonbons** add to the festivities.





# Act II, Scene II: The Kingdom of Sweets

Finally the **Dew Drop** and all of the **Flower Fairies** welcome Clara and the Prince to the Kingdom of Sweets. Clara imagines herself all grown up as the **Sugar Plum Fairy**. A wedding veil graces the Sugar Plum Fairy as she and the Prince are married with all the dolls from the Kingdom of Sweets.



# Act II, Scene III: Home Again

Clara awakens to find her Nutcracker still under the tree.

She remembers her beautiful dream and smiles at the toy that inspired a wonderful trip of fantasy.







# Ballet Terms

- ❄️ A *ballet* (ba-LAY) is a performance of dancing set to music, without words, which often tells a story.
- ❄️ *Adage* (a-DAHZ): A series of slow and graceful movements displaying the dancer's control and coordination.
- ❄️ *Allegro* (a-LEH-groh) Italian: Fast steps that include small and large jumps.
- ❄️ *Arabesque* (a-ra-BESK): A basic pose where the dancer stands on one leg and raises the other leg behind.



# Ballet Terms

- ❖ Ballet began in the Italian Renaissance courts of the 15th and 16th centuries, and then spread to France. In the 17th century, King Louis XIV founded several dance academies and the Paris Opera Ballet. Ballet then spread to Russia in the mid 1700's. To this day, French is the language used to describe ballet movements, exercises, and direction.
- ❖ *Ballerina* (bah-leh-REE-nah) Italian: A principal female dancer.
- ❖ *Barre* (bar): A long rail, usually attached to the wall at waist height, which is used to offer hand support for the dancer for warm up exercises at the beginning of class.
- ❖ *Battement* (Bat-MAHN): A beating action of the extended or bent leg.
- ❖ *Changement* (shahnzh-MAHN): A jump with a change of feet.





# Ballet Terms

- ❄ *Choreographer* (kor-e-AH-gra-fer): Someone who makes up ballets or dances. The actual steps of the ballet are called the choreography.
- ❄ *Corps de Ballet* (kawr-duh-ba-LAY): The body of the ballet, meaning the dancers who do not dance alone.
- ❄ *Danseur* (dahn-SUHR): Male dancer.
- ❄ *Divertissements* (di-'v r-t s-m ns): Short dances, generally performed by one or up to five dancers.
- ❄ *Entrechat* (ahn-truh-SHAH): Interweaving or braiding. A step of beating in which the dancer jumps into the air and rapidly crosses the legs before and behind each other.



# Ballet Terms

❄ *Fouetté* (fweh-TAY): A whipping turn.

❄ *Grand Jeté* (grahn zhuh-TAY): A large leap from one leg to the other.

❄ *Pirouette* (Peer-WET): A turn on one foot.

❄ *Plié* (plee-AY): A bending of the legs from the knees. Soft small pliés cushion the landing from jumps or from pointe.

❄ *Pas de Deux* (pah-duh-DUH): A dance for two, usually performed by the ballerina and her partner, the premier danseur.





# Ballet Terms

- ❄ *Pointe Shoe*: A shoe made of many layers of glue and burlap, covered with satin that enables the female dancer to stand on the end of her toes.
- ❄ *Port de Bras* (pawr-duh-BRAH): Movements of the arms.
- ❄ *Sur les Pointes* (soor-lay-PWENT): On the points or tip toes.
- ❄ *Tutu* (tew-TEW): A long or short ballet skirt.
- ❄ *Variation* (ver-e-A-shen): A solo dance in a classical ballet.

# The Five Positions of the Feet



First Position



Second Position



Third Position



Fourth Position



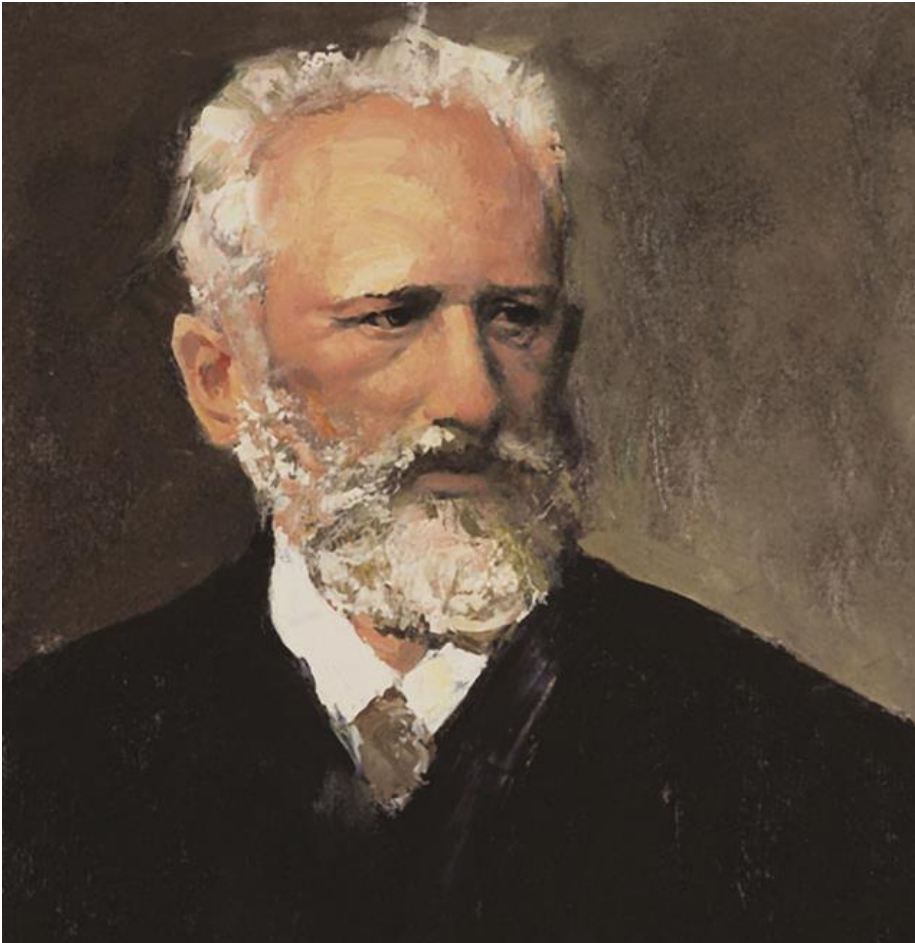
Fifth Position

In classical ballet, the legs and feet move to and from the five fundamental positions set forth in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Pierre Beauchamps.

The feet and legs are “turned out” from the hip socket to produce a beautiful visual line of the leg and to increase stability.



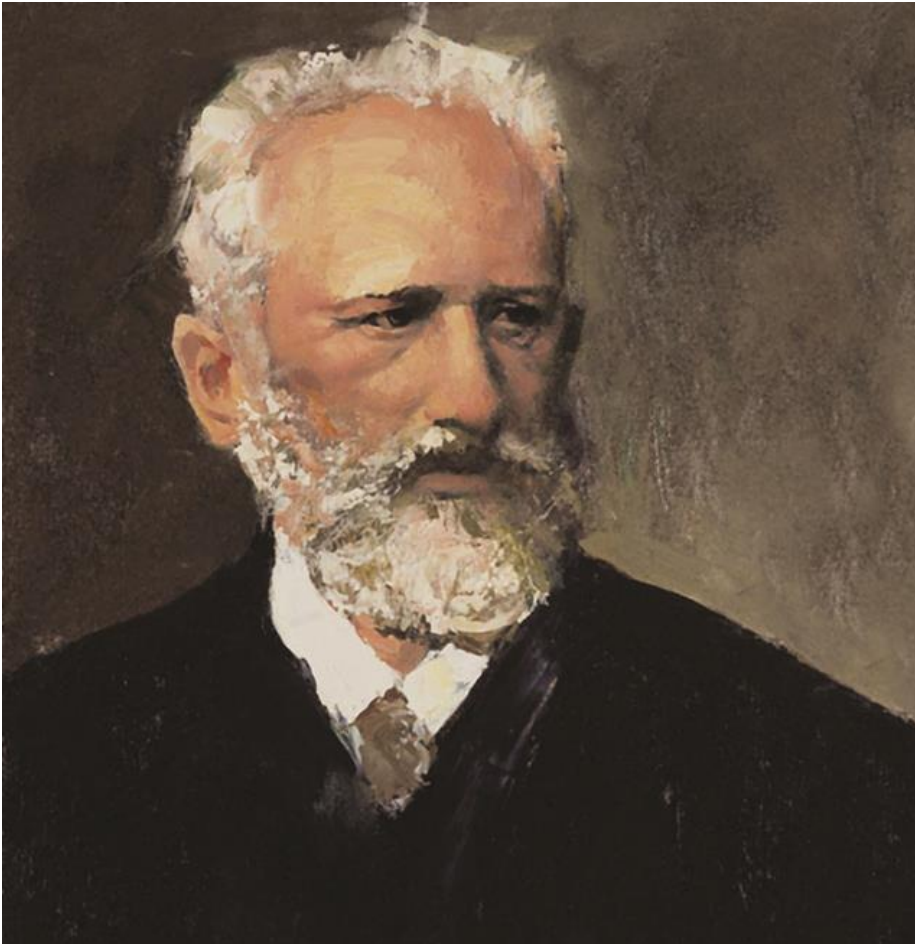
# The Composer



Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (May 7, 1840 – November 6, 1893) is one of the most famous composers in the world and universally regarded as the greatest musician in the history of Russia. He wrote many different kinds of music, including three of the greatest ballet scores ever written, including: *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*.

Tchaikovsky was born into a middle-class family and even as a child it was clear that he had extraordinary musical talent. At age four he wrote a song for his mother's birthday. When he began to take music lessons he very quickly was able to play better than his teacher.

# The Composer



He began a career as a professor of music theory but he found that he loved composing rather than teaching music. He wrote many symphonies, concertos, operas and quartets but some of his best successes came with that most characteristic and beloved Russian art form, the ballet.

Although his music was very popular Tchaikovsky was not always happy. Even so, his public reputation grew. He traveled the world conducting his own works and especially enjoyed his experiences in the United States. His genius created some of the most beautiful and romantic melodies that we enjoy to this day.



# How a Ballet is Created

How does a ballet get created? The **choreographer** is the leader behind a ballet performance and they compose the steps of the dance using knowledge of music and ballet.

Whatever the motivation, it is the choreographer who creates all the ballet's steps and movements.

The choreographer is also responsible for working with the set, costume and lighting designers to make sure that all aspects of the ballet work together beautifully.



# How a Ballet is Created

If the ballet is to tell a story, as *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake* and *The Firebird* do, the choreographer must first write a scenario. How many acts should there be in the entire ballet? What should be included in each scene?

Sometimes a story is written to fit a piece of music that already exists. In other instances, the story is written first, and then the music is commissioned to go with it.

When *The Nutcracker* was created, for example, **Marius Petipa** first wrote out a very detailed scenario based on the story by E.T.A. Hoffman.





# How a Ballet is Created

When it comes to actually creating what the dancers will do on stage, choreographers work in a variety of ways. Some plan everything before they ever enter the rehearsal studio to begin working with the dancers.

**George Balanchine**, a famous choreographer in New York, would study the music thoroughly before he went to the studio, but it was only in the presence of the dancers that he would actually create the movements of his ballet.

Listening to a phrase of music, he would imagine movements and show them to the dancers, who would copy him.

For Balanchine, the dancers were an essential part of the creative process.



# How a Ballet is Created

Choreographing a ballet is a slow process. It may take an hour of rehearsal time to create one or two minutes of dance and it takes many, many hours to create an entire ballet. Imagine how many steps there must be in a half-hour long ballet!

Dancers must have very good memories to remember all these steps from day to day as they are being created, and they acquire what is called “muscle memory.”

Once the ballet is completed, the dancers rehearse their parts again and again before they dance in front of the audience.

The cast members of the *First Coast Nutcracker* have been rehearsing their parts since August!





# How a Ballet is Created

As soon as the choreographer's ideas have begun to take shape, the set, costume and lighting designers are consulted.

Scenery must be built and painted; props must be prepared; special effects must be planned. Fabrics must be ordered, costumes cut and sewn.

Each costume must fit perfectly so that the dancer can move properly in it on stage, and much of the sewing is done by hand.



# How a Ballet is Created

Finally, opening night arrives, and the choreographer has the thrill of seeing the ballet performed, complete with costumes, sets, lighting, a full orchestra – and an audience!

As you watch and listen, think of the many elements that are required to bring a beautiful performance to the stage.





# The Jacksonville Symphony

When you attend the *First Coast Nutcracker* you also hear a live symphony orchestra! The musicians who are playing Tchaikovsky's incomparable score are part of the Jacksonville Symphony.

When the orchestra accompanies a ballet, they are hidden in the **orchestra pit** directly below the stage.

Before the performance and during intermission, you can walk to the front of the theater and see where the musicians sit and hear them tuning their instruments.



# The Jacksonville Symphony

The term “**orchestration**” refers to the instruments that the composer uses to play the different parts of his composition. Tchaikovsky was very famous for his ability to beautifully orchestrate his music.

Tchaikovsky calls for a large orchestra for *The Nutcracker*.

It includes: three flutes, one piccolo, two oboes, one English horn, two clarinets, one bass clarinet, two bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, three percussionists, one harp, one celesta and five string sections.

The string sections consist of first and second violins, violas, cellos and bass violins.

The percussionists play drums, cymbals, castanets, bells, chimes, gongs, tambourines, triangles and a ratchet.





# The Jacksonville Symphony

Throughout the performance you can easily identify some of the instruments.

For instance, the English horn and the oboe are featured in the Arabian dance, the harp plays the introduction of the Waltz of the Flowers and the celesta is the delicate music of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

The percussionists are able to make many sound effects with their vast array of instruments.

You will hear the ratchet making the sound of the Nutcracker, the chimes tolling the hour on the great clock, and the castanets clicking the rhythm in the Spanish dance.



# Being a Good Audience Member

A ballet performance is a very special occasion. All the dancers on stage, the backstage crew and the musicians in the orchestra pit have worked very hard to make the performance a success. The audience members also have an important part to play.

When getting ready at home, you may want to choose a special outfit as you would for a party.

You should arrive at the theater a few minutes early to find your seat and get settled before the curtain goes up.

You may talk quietly with your neighbor until the conductor appears, signaling the beginning of the performance.





# Being a Good Audience Member

When the show begins you should sit quietly and enjoy the exciting activity on stage. You should remain seated until intermission or until the end of production. This is a polite way to respect other audience members and appreciate the dancers' efforts.

Another important way to show your appreciation is by applauding.

When dancers have performed especially beautifully, members of the audience can clap their hands briefly during the show.





# Being a Good Audience Member

At the end of the performance, the audience applauds at length, thanking all of the dancers and musicians. There may be a number of “**curtain calls**,” during which the dancers take their group and solo bows.

Sometimes a performance has been so pleasing that everyone in the audience rises to their feet and applauds. This is called a “**standing ovation**.”

When the curtain has come down for the last time and the applause ends it is time to begin filing quietly out of the theater.

