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Ballet Virginia International Presents “*The Nutcracker*”

Guests Artists from Houston Ballet and Atlantic Ballet of Canada join company with Full Orchestra from Symphonicity

(Norfolk, VA—November 20, 2013) –A young girl’s dream of a magical Nutcracker that comes to life will fill the stage when [Ballet Virginia International](#) (BVI) presents “The Nutcracker,” Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 21 at 2 p.m., 7:30 p.m., and Dec. 22 at 2 p.m. at the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts.

Guest artists from the renowned Houston Ballet and Atlantic Ballet of Canada will join BVI’s Performing Company and a cast of over 100 young dancers from the Hampton Roads community to stage this beloved holiday classic. The dancers will be accompanied with full orchestra from Symphonicity, the symphony orchestra of Virginia Beach.

BVI’S reputation in creating and producing professional quality performances has enabled the ballet to attract acclaimed artists and train the next generation of dancers. New this year, the role of Sugar Plum Fairy will be danced by [Katharine Precourt](#) and the role of Cavalier performed by [Linnar Looris](#), both of Houston Ballet. Both artists have performed many lead roles to critical acclaim with Houston Ballet and other ballet companies around the world. LeeAnn Walker, a BVI alumnus, will dance the role of Dream Clara along with Brian Gephart as the Prince. Mr. Gephart comes to BVI with years of professional dance experience including Houston Ballet II, Joffrey Ballet of Chicago and currently Atlantic Ballet of Canada. Cornelius Barlett and Shomaree Potter round out the esteemed professional dancers leading our talented cast.

“BVI is honored to have these professional artists lead our region’s finest young dancers in what promises to be BVI’s best ‘Nutcracker’ yet,” said Suzanne Lownsbury Long, co-artistic director for BVI.

In addition, Long says the ballet company is excited to be working again this year with [Symphonicity](#), “providing a depth to the production that gives both dancers and audiences a rich experience.”

Maestro David S. Kunkel will conduct the live orchestra of over 50 musicians in all four public performances at the Sandler Center. The orchestra will perform Tchaikovsky's original score and include strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion, harp, celesta and more.

This year, audiences will again notice new sets, including a new backdrop for Second Act. "We are making our 'Nutcracker' a true Hampton Roads creation," said Janina Michalski Bove, co-artistic director for BVI. "All our new sets are locally designed and produced, the choreography is created right here in our Norfolk studios, the musicians are local and of course BVI's dancers are growing up right here in our community."

For over a decade, Bove and Long have produced an annual Hampton Roads "Nutcracker" as co-artistic directors. The duo's past "Nutcracker" productions have graced the stages of Chrysler Hall, Harrison Opera House and now, for the fourth year, the Sandler Center. BVI is the resident ballet company at the Sandler Center. Last year's "Nutcracker" performances drew more than 4,600 in attendance.

Tickets for BVI's production of "The Nutcracker" at the Sandler Center range in price from \$20 to \$47 and can be purchased at the Sandler Center Box Office, www.ynottix.com or 1-877-YNOTTIX. School performances, at discounted prices, will be offered at the Sandler Center Dec. 19 and 20 at 10 a.m., providing local students the opportunity to experience this classic holiday event. Further information and reservation can be found by [contacting BVI](#). BVI will also perform an abridged version of "The Nutcracker" on Dec. 14 and 15 at the [Suffolk Center for the Cultural Arts](#).

Please visit [Ballet Virginia International's website](#) for additional information and our season performance schedule.

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About Ballet Virginia International

BVI specializes in a diverse ballet syllabus inspired by the American, Russian, Italian and French schools. This solid technical base ensures added success in Modern Dance, Jazz and Character classes also offered at BVI. Musicality and artistry are developed joyously in our supportive environment. The professional quality productions allow selected students and community dancers the opportunity to truly experience dance as a performance art.