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Ballet Virginia International Presents:

“The Nutcracker”

Guests artists from around the country join the company with full orchestra from Symphonicity.

(Norfolk, VA—November 16, 2016) –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. 16 at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 17 at 2 p.m., 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 18 at 2 p.m. at the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts in Virginia Beach.

Guest artists from around the country will join BVI’s company and a cast talented of dancers from the Hampton Roads community to stage this beloved holiday classic. The dancers will be accompanied by 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. Returning for a second year, will be [Richard Villaverde](#) as The Prince. [Francesca Forcella](#) will perform the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Both of these artists are currently dancing with [Ballet X](#), Philadelphia’s premiere contemporary ballet company, and have performed many roles to critical acclaim with Ballet X and other ballet companies. LeeAnn Elder, a BVI alumnus, will dance the role of Dream Clara. Ms. Elder is currently a member of [Roanoke City Ballet](#). Rounding out the esteemed cast of guest artists is Stephen Gregory, formerly of [Ballet West](#). Mr. Gregory will return to perform the role of Drosselmeyer.

“BVI is honored to have these professional artists lead our region’s finest dancers in what promises to be a stunning production” said Suzanne Lownsbury, co-artistic director for BVI.

In addition, Lownsbury says, “The ballet company is excited to have a live orchestra for the sixth year in a row. Live music provides a depth to the production that gives both dancers and audiences a richer experience.”

[Steven Brindle](#) 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 touches, including updated choreography and costumes. “We continue to make 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 now, Bove and Lownsbury 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 seventh year, the Sandler Center. BVI is the resident ballet company at the Sandler Center. Last year’s “Nutcracker” performances, which included four public performances and three student matinees, drew more than 6,000 in attendance.

Tickets for BVI’s production of “The Nutcracker” with live orchestra at the Sandler Center range in price from \$18 to \$55 and can be purchased at the Sandler Center Box Office, www.ynottix.com or 1-877-YNOTTIX. Student matinees will be offered at discounted prices at the Sandler Center Dec. 14th, 15th and 16th 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](#).

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

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About Ballet Virginia International

Ballet Virginia International (BVI) is a Regional Ballet Company with an associated Academy which provides quality professional productions/performances and training for classical dancers in the Hampton Roads Community. BVI will uphold the standards required to maintain membership standing with the Southeastern Regional Ballet Association (SERBA) for Regional Dance America. BVI will also provide opportunities for professional dancers, lighting, set and costume designers and choreographers while continuing education and outreach programs for our community at large.

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 experience dance as a performance art.