

Youth Ballet's *The Nutcracker*: COVID-19 style

by Ava Hoelscher
of *The Gleaner*

The Dubuque City Youth Ballet's production of *The Nutcracker* is an annual holiday tradition for dancers and their fans. Christmas would not feel the same without the whimsical storytelling, beautiful dancing, colorful costumes, and familiar melodies.

This year, the high number of COVID cases in the Dubuque community created fear that the ballet would be cancelled. However, the company's directors were committed to giving their dancers a performance opportunity. They implemented precautions to keep dancers safe, such as requiring face masks when rehearsing, social distancing during classes and in choreography, and double casting the ballet to limit cast sizes. Through it all - the show goes on! Tessa Berning, '22, Clara in this year's production, is thankful to still have the opportunity to dance on stage.



Falling into the 2020 Nutcracker

The Nutcracker cast of 2019 performing their last snow dance routine during last year's holiday season.

"I'm looking forward to showing everyone what we have worked so hard on," said Berning. "I'm also glad we can provide many people with a Christmas tradition they thought might not happen this year." To ensure audience members' safety, only 200 of the Grand Opera House's 650-plus seats will be available for each performance this year, and attendees will be arranged in small socially distanced groups.

In years past, a typical *Nutcracker* performance

has sold out. Berning noted that though it will feel different to perform for a much smaller audience, she feels lucky that they are still able to perform at all. For audience safety, masks will be required at all times and the ballet will be abbreviated, with no intermission. Live streaming from the Grand Opera House is also an option for those who prefer not to attend in person.

Many members of the DCYB have fond memories of their *Nutcracker* experi-

ences and are grateful that the tradition continues this year. Senior Emilia Harris said that watching dancers perform *The Nutcracker* as a child prompted her to begin ballet.

Harris explained, "I would watch the performances and think, *this is what I want to do*. Seeing all the dancers on stage made me dream of being up there performing, too." She began ballet at age 6, and this year is performing her dream role of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

The dancers have certainly felt the effects of COVID this *Nutcracker* season. Noah Ripperger, '23, dancing the role of the Nutcracker, said, "The quality of the show will be different; that's not because of the dancers' talents. It's simply because we are in a pandemic and have had a hard time working with restrictions."

Though the company typically has a strict one-miss policy for rehearsals, that has been altered this year to allow for proper quarantines. Often multiple dancers are missing from each rehearsal, which has made it difficult for the company to properly space and rehearse group scenes. However, the company has kept high spirits and believes the show can come together nicely.

Cast One performances are Dec. 10, 11, 12 and 13; Cast Two performances are Dec. 17, 18, 19 and 20. Members of the DCYB will appreciate your support during this altered *Nutcracker* season.

Spotify Christmas playlist

Lola Grap

"That's Christmas to Me" by Pentatonix

Sophie Skemp

"All I Want for Christmas is You" by Mariah Carey

William Herbst

"Frosty the Snowman" by Jimmy Durante

Ava Hoelscher

"Santa Tell Me" by Ariana Grande

Zoey May

"Emmanuel" by Hillsong Worship

Jamie Vondra

"Up on the Housetop" by Pentatonix

Claire Walker

"Mistletoe" by Justin Bieber

Carter Rambousek

"What Christmas Means to Me" by John Legend

Maxwell Wessels

"Jingle Bells" by Pentatonix

Julieanna Baerga

"Mistletoe" by Justin Bieber

Hugh Doyle

"Happy Xmas" by John Lennon

Caroline Hutchinson

"Last Christmas" by Wham!

Michael Spahn

"Jingle Bells" by Bing Crosby

Lilah Takes

"It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" by Michael Buble

Sophie Wagner

"Feliz Navidad" by Jose Feliciano

Brant Perry

"Jingle Bell Rock" by Bobby Helms

Ms. Gaul

"Winter Wonderland" by Michael Buble

New Year calls for new resolutions

by Claire Walker
of *The Gleaner*

To say the least, 2020 has been a whirlwind of events; no one really expected it to go the way it has. On Dec. 31st of 2019, people celebrated, taking on the new year in hopes of a second "Roaring 20s." It has certainly been roaring. As usual, people set goals to make this year one to remember. However, many of those goals were flushed down the drain. As 2021 comes closer, people hope to set their New Year's Resolutions again this year.

Many students and teachers are ready to take on the new year with their resolutions, no matter how big, unique, or small they may be. Ellie Kirby, '22, for example, has made a resolution to improve her watercolor painting. Kirby said, "I have been doing many painting classes at Wahlert, and watercolor is my favorite medium, so I think it would be cool to get really good at it."

Kirby is aided in reaching this goal with the watercolor set her sister is



Painting the New Year
Ellie Kirby, '22, practices the art of water color painting.

getting her for Christmas, along with lots of practice. Ellie added that she has never fully followed through on a New Year's Resolution, but hopes this year will be different, since she is especially excited to reach her goal.

Tatum Manternach, '23, also has a New Year's Resolution, but she is not too excited for hers; she is giving up ice cream.

"Track season is coming up, and I want to be in good shape for that, so I'll eat less ice cream," said Tatum.

Just like Ellie, Tatum can't say she has ever

followed through on a New Year's Resolution, but she hopes the year of 2021 brings about different results. Tatum mentioned she could reach this goal by substituting popsicles for ice cream.

Freshman Kevin Bradley had a similar answer to Tatum's, saying, "I want to stop drinking pop, and I want to eat less sugar." Kevin wants to do this for a healthier lifestyle, specifically inspired by the athletes he watches. He can use their achievements as motivation to improve his own eating habits in order to reach his goals as an athlete.

Mr. Tim Ehrmann, one of Wahlert's beloved teachers, has a New Year's Resolution of working out five times a week instead of three.

He said, "I plan to wake up early on the days I don't normally workout because sometimes it's easier to just get up and do it."

This idea of getting up and going can be applied to all New Year's Resolutions. Instead of putting things off and "starting tomorrow," why not start today?