



SAN FRANCISCO BALLET
HELGI TOMASSON . ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



San Francisco Ballet in Tomasson's *Nutcracker* // © Erik Tomasson

SAN FRANCISCO BALLET RETURNS TO THE WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE WITH *NUTCRACKER*, AN AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRADITION IT ESTABLISHED MORE THAN 75 YEARS AGO

HELGI TOMASSON'S *NUTCRACKER* PAYS TRIBUTE TO SAN FRANCISCO IN THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S FINAL SEASON AT THE HELM

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, October 13, 2021—This December, San Francisco Ballet, the Company and School that has been a trailblazer in dance since its founding in 1933, returns to the War Memorial Opera House from December 10–30 for 29 performances of Artistic Director Helgi Tomasson's beloved *Nutcracker*. Tomasson, who is celebrating the final season of his 37-year tenure leading one of the world's leading ballet companies, set his *Nutcracker* in San Francisco as a tribute to the Company's hometown. With this production, SF Ballet honors the Golden City as it emerges from months of COVID-19 restrictions and all who have supported the Company for nearly 90 years. These performances mark SF Ballet's return to performing for in-person audiences in the newly restored War Memorial Opera House since SF Ballet became the first U.S. cultural organization to cancel performances due to the pandemic.

"It is with great pleasure that we return to live performances of *Nutcracker* after 21 months away from our home stage," said **Tomasson**. "Setting this production in 1915, I wanted to capture the hope, progress, and civic pride felt by San Franciscans following the 1906 earthquake. It is in a similar spirit that we

approach this year's *Nutcracker* and the 2022 Season as our Company, staff, and audiences emerge from this period of historic change."

"We are thrilled to be reunited with our community for this joyous return to *Nutcracker* and the in-person 2022 Season, celebrating Helgi Tomasson's dedicated leadership," added **Interim Executive Director Danielle St.Germain-Gordon**. "In preparing for in-person performances, the health and safety of our audiences, dancers, musicians, and staff were a foremost priority. Through diligent collaboration with the team at the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center and the City of San Francisco, we are delighted to be able to safely share this holiday tradition with San Franciscans and visitors alike."

Tickets are on sale now for live, in-person performances of *Nutcracker* choreographed by Artistic Director Helgi Tomasson. Called "a paean to positive thinking" by *The New York Times* at its 2004 premiere, *Nutcracker* includes more than 300 costume pieces by Tony Award-winning designer Martin Pakledinaz and scenic designs by Michael Yeargan inspired by San Francisco's "Painted Ladies." *Nutcracker's* iconic snow scene returns, with 600 pounds of snow deployed during each performance. With few exceptions, every dancer on SF Ballet's roster will dance in *Nutcracker* during the run of 29 performances.

[Nutcracker](#) tickets start at \$19 and may be purchased online at sfballet.org or by calling 415-865-2000, Monday through Friday from 10 am to 4 pm Pacific.

Casts for each of *Nutcracker's* performances will comprise San Francisco Ballet Company members and students from San Francisco Ballet School who are 12 or older, all of whom have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 per FDA, CDC, and City of San Francisco guidelines.

Casting for *Nutcracker* will be available [here](#) at least one week before each performance. Press images for *Nutcracker* are available on the [online press photos page](#).

As the first American company to present a full-length production of *Nutcracker*, San Francisco Ballet paved the way for the work to become an American holiday classic. The organization has been a trailblazer in classical dance and an originator of other well-loved cultural traditions since its founding in 1933, as the first to perform full-length productions of *Swan Lake* and *Coppélia*. San Francisco Ballet continues to embody its rich heritage and progressive ethos in its programming, balancing an innovative focus on new and contemporary choreography with a deeply held dedication to the classics. Its acclaimed Company has also consistently collaborated with and commissioned works from choreographers such as William Forsythe, Christopher Wheeldon, and Alexei Ratmansky to Trey McIntyre, Cathy Marston, Mark Morris, Dwight Rhoden, and Helgi Tomasson himself, among others.

For nearly 90 years, San Francisco Ballet has contributed to the cultural richness of the Bay Area as an ambassador for the city globally and a dedicated community member at home. It reaches San Franciscans and dance-lovers around the world through performances, training opportunities, and community engagement, while celebrating dance as a transformative source of joy and enrichment, a way of learning, and a physical practice for all ages. The San Francisco Ballet School, one of the most sought-after dance training institutions in the industry, cultivates the next generation of professional dancers for San Francisco Ballet and ballet companies around the world.

Artistic Director and Principal Choreographer Helgi Tomasson has led San Francisco Ballet since 1985. Under his leadership, the organization has continued to be an innovator in dance and become one of the

world's leading ballet companies. San Francisco Ballet will celebrate Tomasson during his final season in 2022, as it honors his legacy and artistic leadership of the company and his tremendous impact on San Francisco's cultural landscape over nearly four decades.

Highlights of the upcoming 2022 season at the War Memorial Opera House include the world premiere of Tomasson's *Harmony*, a work choreographed during the pandemic and Tomasson's 46th work on SF Ballet; *Mrs. Robinson* by Cathy Marston, and new works by Christopher Wheeldon and Dwight Rhoden. Helgi Tomasson's works to be revived on the 2022 Season include *Trio*, *Caprice*, *Don Quixote*, *The Fifth Season*, *Prism*, and *Swan Lake*. *Blake Works I* by William Forsythe and *The Seasons* by Alexei Ratmansky will have their SF Ballet premieres. Additional works on the 2022 Season include *Symphony in C* by George Balanchine, *In the Night* by Jerome Robbins, *La Sylphide* by August Bournonville, and *Magritomania* by Yuri Possokhov.

COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Patrons 12 years and older will be required to show a photo ID alongside proof of vaccination to enter the War Memorial Opera House. Per the health order from San Francisco Department of Public Health, children under 12 must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR or antigen test result. A negative test must be taken within 48 hours of the performance start time. All patrons will be required to wear a mask, regardless of age. Full COVID-19 safety protocols are available [on our website](#).

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO BALLET

San Francisco Ballet is one of the world's leading ballet companies. As a commissioner, collaborator, and presenter, the Ballet performs locally, nationally, and internationally with the top choreographers, artists, and dancers while proudly celebrating its trailblazing role in dance. Since its founding in 1933 as the first professional ballet company in the United States, the organization has been an innovator in dance and an originator of well-loved cultural traditions, from staging the first American production of *Swan Lake* to being the first company in the United States to present an annual holiday *Nutcracker*. In the progressive, innovative spirit of San Francisco, its mission is to share the beauty of classical and contemporary ballet, the joyful, transformative experience of live dance performance by artists working at the highest caliber, and to provide exceptional training opportunities for the next generation of professional dancers in its School.

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