

MUSIC CENTER
STRATHMORE

Strathmore
New Jersey Performing Arts Center
and
Executive Producer Eva Price
present

**THE HIP HOP
NUTCRACKER**

Tuesday–Friday, December 19–22, 2023, 8pm
Thursday, December 21, 2023, 2pm

ADAPTED BY
MIKE FITELSON

Based on *The Nutcracker* by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

WITH SPECIAL GUEST MC
KURTIS BLOW

DJ BOO ANTHONY “OMEN” CABRERA ESITA “FLYYA” CALHOUN ATHENA CRUZ
MICHAEL DELGADO HALIMA DODO ETHAN EVARO G’BARI “GQ” GILLIAM
SETH “REAKTION” HILLARD TRENT JERAY BAPTISTA KAWA TUMELO “MELO” KHUPE
MARISSA LICATA ZUCE MORALES JESSE SMITH JANA E VALENTINE

PRODUCED BY

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
JOHN SCHREIBER, *President & CEO*
DAVID RODRIGUEZ, *Executive Producer*
SIMMA LEVINE, *Producer*

COSTUME DESIGNER
KATY FREEMAN

LIGHTING DESIGNER
BRANDON STIRLING BAKER

PROJECTION DESIGNER
HANNA S. KIM

**ASSOCIATE
CHOREOGRAPHER**
RANDI “RASCAL” FREITAS

**ORIGINAL BEATS &
REMIXES**
DJ BOO

CASTING
RITA MAYE
CASTING

TOUR MARKETING
ALLIED GLOBAL MARKETING

PRESS REPRESENTATIVE
TELLEM GRODY PR

GENERAL MANAGER
MAXIMUM ENTERTAINMENT
PRODUCTIONS

COMPANY MANAGER
DOUG RODGERS

**PRODUCTION
SUPERVISOR**
JOHN FORTUNATO

**EXCLUSIVE TOUR
DIRECTION**
BROADWAY & BEYOND
THEATRICALS

DIRECTED & CHOREOGRAPHED BY
JENNIFER WEBER
featuring freestyles by the Company

Originally produced by the United Palace of Cultural Arts
Mike Fitelson, *Executive Director*

CAST

Special Guest MC.....	KURTIS BLOW
The Nutcracker.....	ANTHONY “OMEN” CABRERA
Chocolate/Ensemble.....	ESITA “FLYYA” CALHOUN
Tea, Ensemble.....	ATHENA CRUZ
Toy/Ensemble.....	MICHAEL “BUFF 90” DELGADO
Maria-Clara.....	HALIMA DODO
Dad.....	G’BARI “GQ” GILLIAM
Mouse King/Ensemble.....	SETH “REAKTION” HILLARD
Flute/Ensemble.....	TRENT JERAY
Candy/Ensemble.....	BAPTISTA KAWA
Drosselmeyer.....	TUMELO “MELO” KHUPE
Chocolate/Ensemble.....	JON “GIFTED” JIMENEZ
Toy/Ensemble.....	ZUCE MORALES
Mom.....	JESSE SMITH

Performance DJ: DJ BOO
Violinist: MARISSA LICATA
Swings: ETHAN EVARO, JANAÈ VALENTINE
Dance Captain: ETHAN EVARO

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Assistant Company Manager.....	Michele Metzger
Production Manager.....	Shane Anderson
Costume Design Assistant.....	Azael Acosta
Associate Lighting Designer.....	Coby Chasman-Beck
Associate Projection Designer.....	Jesus Hurtado
Prop Design and Construction.....	Jackson Berkley
Moving Light Programmer.....	Jeff Englander
Moving Light Programmer.....	Tom Snyder
Projection Unreal Artist.....	Marii Yoshida
Projection Animator.....	Patricia Luna
Qlab Programmer.....	Scott Garner
Production Electrician.....	John Weathers
Electrician.....	Robert Virzera
Technical/Lighting Director.....	Charles Address
Audio/Video Technician.....	Ian Wehrle
Wardrobe Supervisor.....	Jenna Travis
Stitcher.....	Whitney Oppenheimer
Production Assistant.....	Harrison Newton
Original Company Associate Director/Choreographer.....	Taeko Koji
Digital Marketing.....	Fortune Web Marketing
Production Photography.....	Timothy Norris
Tour Promotional Video.....	Carrington Spires
Social Media Captain.....	Janaè Valentine
Physical Therapy.....	Neuro Tour Physical Therapy, Inc.
Director of People and Inclusion.....	Colette Luckie
Travel Agent.....	Road Rebel Global
Lighting and Projection Equipment.....	PRG Lighting
Trucking.....	Clark Transfer

General Management
MAXIMUM ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTIONS

Eva Price Carl Flanigan
Jimmy Wilson Corbin McConnell Dedrick McAlmont
Dhyana Colony Priscilla Villanueva
Avram Freedberg Mary Beth Dale

Exclusive Tour Direction
BROADWAY AND BEYOND
THEATRICALS
Tracey McFarland
Jaymi Gilmour Monica Smith

Tour Marketing
ALLIED GLOBAL MARKETING
Andrew Damer
Jennifer Gallagher Scott Praefke Hayden Anderson
Adina Hsu Amenkha Sembenu Emily Toppen

PLACE

New Year's Eve—Uptown, USA

PLOT

ACT 1

During the annual uptown holiday street party, Maria-Clara is upset by her parents' constant bickering. The mysterious Drosselmeyer appears, bringing magical toys to the party. Drosselmeyer then introduces Maria-Clara to a street vendor selling roasted nuts, who catches her eye because he is different from the other boys on the block. After the party breaks up, Maria-Clara heads home, but on her way, she runs into the menacing Mouse Crew. The Nutcracker, aided by a magic pair of sneakers, defeats the Mouse King and the couple enjoys the romance of winter's first snowfall.

The Hip Hop Nutcracker will be performed with one 20-minute intermission.

ACT 2

Drosselmeyer meets Maria-Clara and The Nutcracker and takes them back in time to the Land of Sweets nightclub on New Year's Eve, 1984. Invisible, the couple watches the party-goers show off the dance styles of the day. Suddenly Maria-Clara realizes she is witnessing the night her parents first met and is overcome by how they were once deeply in love. Back in the present, and with a little more magic, Maria-Clara and The Nutcracker help Mom and Dad reconcile. The community joins them in the celebration.

BIOGRAPHIES

KURTIS BLOW (*Special Guest MC*) is one of the founders and creators of recorded rap. A timeless artist and hip-hop legend, Blow blazed the trail for early hip-hop artists and continues to carry the torch for hip-hop music in new arenas. Kurtis is credited with many accolades, and was the first rapper to ever be signed to a major label, release a certified gold rap album (*The Breaks*), tour the United States and Europe, record a national commercial (Sprite), use the drum machine, sample and sample loop, release a rap music video, and become a millionaire. In 1979, at the age of 20, Blow became the first rapper to be signed by a major label. He released *Christmas Rappin'*, which sold over 400,000 copies and became an annual classic. Its gold follow-up, *The Breaks*, helped ignite an international "rap attack," solidifying the new art form. He released 10 albums over 11 years and his early projects made him an instant success at home and across Europe. Pioneering records like *Party Time* introduced the fusion of rap and go-go. Hit songs like "8 Million Stories," "AJ," and "Basketball" were simply ahead of their time, and still get spins by DJs today. Fellow rap legend Nas debuted at #1 on the *Billboard* Charts with a cover of Blow's "If I Ruled the World" in 1997. Beyond his own hits, Blow contributed to the success of The Fat Boys and Run DMC. In fact, Run began his career billed as "The Son of Kurtis Blow." Among countless others, Wyclef Jean, Lovebug Starski, Sweet Gee, Dr. Jekyll, and Mr. Hyde, Full Force, and Russell Simmons all have been produced by or have worked with Blow in the past. Blow's multidisciplinary skillset has taken him across the country and overseas to score, produce, and act in various films. Most notably, he played a large role in the production of the hit film *Krush Groove*. *The New York Daily News* called his cinematic works

a “noteworthy, dynamic presence.” Blow’s reach transcends that of your typical entertainer. He has completed multiple world tours since the turn of the new millennium, and continues to work on other creative endeavors. His innate ability to reach people is evident in his work as an activist, radio personality, and most recently, an ordained minister and leader of Hip-Hop Church. Artists still pay their respects to Blow’s trailblazing in a number of ways. His influence has been mentioned in seemingly every important hip-hop film in the past decade, from *Get Rich or Die Tryin’* to *Notorious* and *Straight Outta Compton*. He has a prominent presence on television as well, with his music appearing on shows such as *Dancing With The Stars* and *SportsCenter*. He also was an associate producer on the Netflix hit series *The Get Down*. Outside of music, Blow has long been a very spiritual man. He went back to school to become an ordained minister, and has been preaching at churches around the world. His work with Hip-Hop Church has helped bridge the gap between the art form and the church. Education has long been important to Blow. He has been a champion of higher education, and advocates for bringing hip-hop culture into the curriculums of our institutions. The rap pioneer has given talks at schools such as Berklee College of Music in Boston and CalArts in California and plans to continue to carry the culture into the classroom.

DJ BOO (*Original Beats and Remixes, Performance DJ*) is a-NY based Fil-Am DJ/musician who has shared the stage with Ghostface Killah, DJ Kool Herc (The Godfather of Hip-Hop), KRS-1, Snoop Dogg, and Common. He has backed wordsmiths like Eternia, The Juggaknots, and Omar Offendum. In 2014 he served as a cultural ambassador for the U.S. in Nepal, Mozambique, and Swaziland where he performed and conducted hip-hop workshops alongside The Nomadic Wax Collective as part of the American Music Abroad Tour. He has performed at Jacob’s Pillow with Brooklyn-based hip-hop dance company, Decadancetheatre. In spring 2022, Boo created and performed an original piece sampling the work of Igor Stravinsky at Jennifer Weber’s *Stravinsky Imagined* at The Baryshnikov Arts Center.

ANTHONY “OMEN” CABRERA (*Nutcracker*) was born on November 7, 1983. A vivacious child, he always loved to dance—it didn’t matter if it was a family gathering or a large party. While growing up in Boston and the Dominican Republic, he discovered hip-hop and breakdancing (Bboying) through television, but it wasn’t until his high school years that he started training in Bboying. Soon after, he realized his natural ability for dancing and improved rapidly. With the body awareness to control the acrobatic elements of Bboying and the creativity to develop an original style, Omen was quickly

recognized by peers and established Bboys of the dance community. Currently, Omen is part of the world-renowned Bboy crew based out of New York City, Supreme Beings. In addition to winning numerous solo and group competitions at both the national and international level, he has contributed to the dance community by sitting on judging panels and conducting workshops. As a performer, he is part of both G-Force Entertainment and Raw Miami Entertainment. When he is not on board a Carnival cruise ship as a performer, he keeps busy performing for music artists, corporate parties, clubs, and street shows. His other professional interests include modeling and acting.

ESITA “FLYYA” CALHOUN (*Chocolate, Ensemble*) is a 24-year-old Bgirl from Dayton, Ohio, boasting an impressive 11-year journey in the world of hip-hop and breaking. Her dance journey has taken her to extraordinary heights, earning her recognition as the No. 21 Bgirl in the world in 2020. Her electrifying performances have graced stages alongside industry giants like Migos, DJ Khaled, LL Cool J, Mary Mary’s Erica Campbell, DJ KOOL, Salt-n-Pepa, Naughty by Nature, and Dayton sensation Yello Pain. Esita’s dedication to the art extends beyond the stage. She spent four years as a vital member and two years as the Captain of the globally acclaimed Cleveland Cavaliers Scream Team. Her captivating performances left an indelible mark on fans. With over five years of teaching experience in breaking, tumbling, competition, and recreational dance, Esita is committed to nurturing the next generation of dancers. Her mission is to share her love for hip-hop dance across the United States and around the world. Esita’s journey is a testament to her passion and perseverance, all while being a proud mother to her daughter, Karmen.

ATHENA CRUZ (*Tea, Ensemble*) feels great pleasure from being able to share the joy that hip-hop has brought into her life since the age of 12. Seeing an East Coast movement inspire a young Los Angeles native like herself is a testament to how universal the joy of dance is. May the infectious spirit of hip-hop be felt tonight. She would like to thank her Krump mentors Big FUUDD and Childish.

MICHAEL “BUFF 90” DELGADO (*Toy, Ensemble*) is a 35-year-old Bboy from San Bernardino, California, with over 15 years of breaking experience both on stage and in competitions. He has represented the legendary Air Force Crew for over seven years where he learned from the great legends such as Lil Cesar, Wilpower, and Mr. Animation. In over 10 years of teaching experience, he has shown kids and adults that dancing goes beyond the stage or in the cyphers and can teach us valuable lessons in our own lives. He has blessed the stage, with his amazing Bboy skills and with Kurtis Blow

countless times and is ready to do it again in this year's *Hip Hop Nutcracker*. This talented actor and Bboy is ready to show both his theatrical and Bboy skills on stage.

HALIMA DODO (*Maria-Clara*) is a dance artist committed to authenticity in movement. Her journey began in the suburbs of Miramar, Florida, and she has since made a home for her craft in Los Angeles where she is on a mission to explore and celebrate expressions in hip-hop, house, dancehall, and experimental dance. She has performed for major recording artists like Meek Mill, DJ Khaled, Justin Bieber, Daddy Yankee, Anitta, and Yemi Alade, web shows on *Pop Sugar and Steezy*, and various indie/feature films—including Ryan Murphy's *The Prom* and Beyonce's *Black Is King*. Through dance, Halima has enjoyed a career that goes beyond the limits of commercial and community—immersing her passion for dance in culture-driven spaces at Movement Lifestyle, LUX Dance Convention, Go OFFF Studios, Cambio Studio, and more. This year, she joins the cast and family of *Hip Hop Nutcracker* as María-Clara.

ETHAN EVARO (*Swing, Dance Captain*) a San Diego, California native, moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in the entertainment industry while getting an education. He graduated with a BFA in Commercial Dance from Hussian College in Studio, Los Angeles in 2021. Though specializing in break dancing, Evaro has trained extensively in a variety of dance styles and prides himself on his versatility. He recently completed a Europe and United Kingdom tour for the renowned drag queen, Vanessa Vanjie Mateo, and has also performed in Janet Jackson's *Unbreakable* tour. Along with these accomplishments, Evaro has also performed and worked at a variety of charity events including A Salute to Teachers and The Natural High Anniversary. Evaro strives to bring his break dancing roots and a calm, hardworking attitude into all his professional endeavors.

G'BARI "GQ" GILLIAM (*Dad*) G'bari Gilliam, a.k.a. "GQ," grew up in Northern California. He began dancing in the Bay Area at the age of 13. His first style of dance being West African dance. But in high school he took an interest in hip-hop dance and began choreographing dances for Berkeley High School. He attended UCLA and received his degree in Dance in 2016. During his time at UCLA, he gained knowledge and experience in freestyle, learning the history and techniques of multiple street dance forms. G'bari has knowledge of many styles of dance such as hip-hop, house, whacking, vogue, traditional West African, contemporary dance, and more. G'bari is an active participant in the Street Dance community and is known around the world

for participating in Freestyle events in hip-hop, house, and whacking. GQ continues to grow and has worked with companies and artists including Adidas, Bad Bunny, Janelle Monae, Hennessy, Tyler Perry, Disney, and more.

SETH "REAKTION" HILLARD (*Mouse King*) was born in Toledo, Ohio and now lives in Los Angeles, California. Hillard is a competitive Bboy (Breakdancer), martial artist, and freestyler. Hillard studied at the Toledo School for the Arts and has years of experience as a hip-hop dancer, painter, stand-up comedian, and capoeira instructor. This is his fifth year as a featured dancer in the *Hip Hop Nutcracker*. His other live performances include the *Illusionist* tour, Shelia E, Slick Rick ft. Rob Base & Chubb Rock, and the 45th annual GMA Dove Awards with Mandisa. Hillard's video features include artist such as Michael Jackson, Justin Timberlake, Taboo (Black Eyed Peas), and Nick Cannon. He has appeared on TV shows such as The Emmy's with Adam Samberg and *Blackish*. You can also catch him in commercials for brands like Nesquik, Samsung, Pepsi, and an upcoming 2024 Skechers advertisement. Hillard is best known for his musicality.

TRENT JERAY (*Flute, Ensemble*) was born in Elgin, Illinois and raised in Memphis, Tennessee. He first stepped onto a stage his freshman year of high school and showcased a style called the Memphis Jookin. Ever since, he knew performing was the thing he wanted to pursue. Jeray went on to Las Vegas to become a soloist for the Cirque Du Soleil's *The Beatles Love* and *Michael Jackson One*. After his Cirque Run, he received the opportunity to be a performer for the legendary rock group Aerosmith during their residency. Jeray's goal when performing is to inspire others and if you're having a bad day hopefully be a light that will put a smile on your face. Find him on Instagram @trentjeray and on TikTok @trentjeray901

BAPTISTA KAWA (*Candy, Ensemble*) aka Bboy Bathy is a dancer from Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo. At 13, he would sneak into his classroom after school and practice the dance moves he saw in movies. His unique mix of power moves, flip combinations, and traditional Congolese Ndombolo set him apart. In 2020, he won the All-Style category at Battle Hope (Rwanda). In 2017 and 2019 he won the hip-hop category at Goma Dance Festival (DRC). In 2017 and 2018 he won the hip-hop category at Danse ya Kivu Battle (DRC). In 2017, 2018, and 2019 he won the hip-hop and krump category at Batalo East (Uganda). In 2015 he won the All-Style Battle at CIFF (DRC) and in 2013 his crew New Youngs won the Group Battle at Mabina Fara Fara (DRC). He has been a member of New Youngs crew and ITIG

Don Bosco Acrobatics. In 2012, he joined Street Dancers Company, the top urban afro-fusion and contemporary dance company in DRC. He has performed in films (*Street Off* with Bboy Lilou, *Fikra Zau Coloni*, and *Ukweli*), music videos (*Ndombe Dance*) and live throughout Goma and at international arts festivals around East Africa and West Africa including: *Ubumuntu Arts Festival* (Rwanda), *Nyege Nyege Festival* (Uganda), *Kkoolo Breaking Androguynous* (Uganda), *Batalo East* (Uganda) International dance festival of *Ouagadougou* (Burkina Faso), and *Amani Festival* (DRC). He also teaches Afro-fusion hip-hop and breakdance to local youth at *Kuyakujuwa Dance Project*. He also joined *Jacob Jonas' The Company* in 2022.

TUMELO "MELO" KHUPE (*Drosselmeyer*) is a performing artist, krumper, and emerging choreographer based in the Twin Cities and from Botswana. Her artistry investigates and explores how the body manifests lived experiences through movement. Krump is foundational in her work as it offers endless possibilities for storytelling through its technique and language. She makes use of some elements of theater to reveal these moments through freestyle or improvisation. The four pillars of her artistry are rawness, discovery, individuality, and spirituality. She graduated with a BA in Music Theater with a minor in Dance. Some awards received are the David Wick Leadership Award, the David Wick Best Choreography Award, and The Mabel Meta Frey Outstanding Theater Artist Award. She is a Naked Stages Fellow, Generating Room Fellow, Next Step Fund grantee, and most recently, a Chawrcha, a next-generation choreographic lab Fellow.

MARISSA LICATA (*Violinist*) New York and Boston-based, Honduran American violinist, Licata, is a star powerhouse soloist. With a Bachelor and Masters of Music from the New England Conservatory, her electrifying passion and vibrant presence have been featured on world-renowned stages across four continents. Licata has collaborated, recorded, and performed as featured soloist on national and international tours with H.E.R., Alicia Keys, Jethro Tull, Wyclef Jean, Ben Harper, Ringo Starr, K. Michelle, Dave Stewart of Eurythmics, Gloria Estefan, Pras of The Fugees, and many more. Her major TV appearances include, *Good Morning America*, *The View*, *The Latin Grammys*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, and the *BET Awards*. In addition to being active within the orchestral and chamber music scenes, guesting at festivals throughout the Northeast and performing with the Boston Ballet, Licata's Broadway and pre-Broadway credits include concertmistress for *Jagged Little Pill*, *Moby-Dick: The Musical*, and most recently, the 2023 Broadway revival of *1776*.

ZUCE MORALES (*Toy, Ensemble, Assistant Choreographer*) was born and raised in Puebla, Mexico, where she began her formal dance training at the age of 15. She then moved to Los Angeles in 2016 at 19 years old to pursue her dreams as a professional dancer. She is trained in hip-hop, whacking, popping, house, and other dance forms but her specialty is locking. While she trained at the legendary Debbie Reynolds Dance Studios, Movement Lifestyle, and Millennium, she attended Glendale College where she got two certifications, one in Dance Teaching and another in Choreography and Dance Technique Studies. Currently, Morales is focused on making the locking dance community grow in Los Angeles, by teaching at professional studios like Millennium Dance Complex and hosting free community sessions in the area called "LA Locking Lab." Her goal is to give opportunities to the new generation of dancers who care and respect the legacy of the street dance OGs.

JESSE SMITH (*Mom*) is a dancer, choreographer, director, and producer originally from Denver, Colorado, based in Los Angeles, California. She has performed in television shows, commercials, music videos, theaters, clubs, and battles, and is trained in several styles ranging from ballet and hip-hop, to contemporary, modern, and house. She has choreographed and directed several projects for showcases and film, and has produced several workshops with dance artists from all over the world, alongside hosting a free, bi-weekly house session for the dance community that she established in 2022. She enjoys the versatility that dance brings, and aims to wear even more 'hats' in pursuit of her ever-evolving creative expression and storytelling.

JANAÈ VALENTINE (*Swing*) With a profound love for movement and expression, Valentine is a professional dancer with five years of experience in the dance industry. Specializing in hip-hop, krump, jazz, and contemporary, Valentine has received rigorous training from American Dramatic Academy of Los Angeles and participated in workshops under esteemed choreographers like Fresh Redding, Rhapsody James, and Donyelle Jones. Her expertise encompasses a fusion of technical precision and emotional storytelling. Janaè loves to be inspired by her peers and is always ready to take her dance career to the next level. With an unwavering commitment to the dance community, she continues to evolve and enchant through the language of movement.

JENNIFER WEBER (*Director, Choreographer*) Broadway/ West End: & *Juliet* (Olivier & Tony Nominations, Best Choreography). Broadway/Off Broadway: *KPOP* (Tony Nomination, Best Choreography), *Teenage Dick* (The Public), *Cruel Intentions* (LPR/US Tour). Film: Disney's *Zombies 2*, *While You Were Gone* (Emmy Award, short form)

entertainment). Commissions: Tulsa Ballet, LA Music Center, Baryshnikov Arts Center, NY City Center. Weber is the co-creator, director, and choreographer of *The Hip Hop Nutcracker*, featuring rap legend Kurtis Blow, touring annually across the United States and recorded for an Emmy winning PBS All Arts special. In 2022, she collaborated with Disney as executive producer/choreographer on a new film version of *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* for Disney+. Find her on Instagram @jenniferwebernyc

RANDI "RASCAL" FREITAS (*Associate Choreographer*) is a versatile dancer, choreographer, and educator based in Los Angeles, California. With a valued presence in both the industry and community, Freitas' talent is influential and sought after in multiple arenas within the dance world. Randi has performed with Justin Timberlake, SZA, Travis Scott, Karol G, and Kaytranada, and danced in commercials for AT&T, Toyota, and Target. She has performed on *The Ellen Show*, *The American Music Awards*, *The Kid's Choice Awards*, *The Grammy's*, and more. Randi toured the nation as associate director/choreographer of the *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* and can be seen in *Spirited*, Apple's musical starring Will Ferrell and Ryan Reynolds. In the underground scene Freitas was not only the 2021 RedBull BC One Boston Winner, but also a RedBull BC One US National Finalist. Recently she placed as a Bronze Medalist in both the Arizona and Los Angeles Olympic Qualifiers. As an educator, Freitas taught hip-hop at USC and CalArts, has taught throughout the United States and internationally. In addition to her work in the industry, community, and institution, she is currently in partnership with Nike as a consultant for specialty shoe building. She is the founder of OMEGA Flow Floorwork, a training program, company, and curriculum for dancers worldwide. While her training program is not exclusive to womxn, it stands as a space of integrity for them to learn and grow.

MIKE FITELSON (*Writer/Co-Creator*) is the executive producer at the United Palace, the 91-year-old Wonder Theatre in Washington Heights, Manhattan's 4th largest theatre. In 2014 as the executive director of the nonprofit United Palace of Cultural Arts (UPCA) he co-created *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* with Jennifer Weber, adapting the story and supplying the images for the scenery, and produced its premiere. Fitelson has worked to build the Northern Manhattan arts community for 18 years. He co-founded the annual arts festival, the Uptown Arts Stroll, in 2003; served in every capacity of the *Manhattan Times*, the bilingual community newspaper of Washington Heights and Inwood, from 2002–2011; and helped found the nonprofit Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance in 2006. He is thrilled the show is returning to the Paramount Theatre in his hometown of Oakland, CA, where he watched his first *Nutcracker* in the early 1980s.

KATY FREEMAN (*Costume Designer*) started her journey with *Hip Hop Nutcracker* in 2021 as wardrobe supervisor and is thrilled to be back with the crew as costume designer. She serves as the Costume Director for The Dance Theatre of Harlem. Her costumes have been seen on stages across the United States and internationally, including, New York City Center, Kennedy Center, and Lincoln Center. Noted collaborations have been with Christopher Wheeldon, William Forsyth, and Virginia Johnson. George Balanchine's "Allegro Brillante" is her most recent design for the company. She studied costume design at SUNY Purchase and has a costume studio in Brooklyn where she designs and creates custom one of a kind looks for nightlife personalities, burlesque, and drag performers. Her designs can be seen often on RuPaul's *Drag Race*.

BRANDON STIRLING BAKER (*Lighting Designer*) is an award-winning lighting designer working internationally in the areas of dance, opera, and theater. His work can be seen on stages throughout the United States and abroad including Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Hollywood Bowl, Walt Disney Concert Hall, New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Australian Ballet, Hong Kong Ballet, American Ballet Theater, Opera Philadelphia, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Miami City Ballet, Boston Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Houston Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, Semperoper Dresden, Staatsballett Berlin, and many others. Since 2010, Baker has designed over 30 world premieres for choreographer Justin Peck. Additional collaborations include new works by Savion Glover, Suffjan Stevens, William Forsythe, Jamar Roberts, Lauren Lovette, Anthony Roth Costanzo, and many others. Baker is the resident lighting designer of Boston Ballet and recipient of the Knight of Illumination Award. Learn more on Baker's website at www.stirlingbaker.com.

HANA S. KIM (*Projection Designer*) Broadway: *The Old Man And The Pool* (Lincoln Center), *Summer 1976* (MTC). Off-Broadway/New York: *The Harder They Come* (The Public Theater), *The Visitor* (The Public Theater, Lucile Lortel Nom), *Eve's Song* (The Public Theater), *Everything Rises* (BAM), *Magdalene* (Prototype Festival). New music/opera: *L'Orfeo* (Santa Fe Opera), *Sweet Land* (The Industry), *The Anonymous Lover* (LA Opera). Regional: Geffen Playhouse, OSF, South Coast Rep, Magic Theatre, A.C.T, among others. Awards: Princess Grace Award, Sherwood Award from CTG, Helen Hayes Award, LA Drama Critics Circle Distinguished Achievement Award, among others. Learn more on Kim's website at www.hananow.com.

JOHN N. FORTUNATO (*Production Supervisor*) is thrilled to be joining the *Hip Hop Nutcracker* team! Broadway: *Mr. Saturday Night*, Off-Broadway: *Exception To The Rule*, National Tour: *Cats*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *How The Grinch Stole Christmas: The Musical*, Disney's *The Lion King*, *Bat Out of Hell: The Musical*, and others. Other credits include *Rodgers and Hammerstein: A Broadway Celebration* with The Transport Group, *Mamma Mia!* at Skylight Music Theatre, productions with Nevada Ballet Theatre, and Syracuse Opera. Thank you to my family for their endless support. Ithaca College Alum.

ALLIED GLOBAL MARKETING (*Tour Marketing*) an integrated marketing agency working with the world's largest entertainment, sports, consumer, and lifestyle brands, including 75+ Broadway shows over more than two decades. Other current tours: *Ain't Too Proud*, *The Book of Mormon*, *Hadestown*, *Mean Girls*, *Pretty Woman*, and *Tootsie*. Upcoming tours: *Beetlejuice*, *Elf The Musical*, *Funny Girl*, *The Hip Hop Nutcracker*, and *Mrs. Doubtfire*.

MEP (*General Manager*) is a producing, developing, and management company founded by Avram Freedberg, Mary Beth Dale, and Eva Price; and is joined by Managing Director/General Manager Carl Flanigan. Select Broadway, Off-Broadway, and touring credits include *Titanique* (Off-Broadway 2022); *What the Constitution Means to Me* (national tour 2021); August Wilson's *Jitney* (national tour 2019–2020); *Cruel Intentions: The '90s Musical*; *Small Mouth Sounds*; *Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons on Broadway!*; *The Hip Hop Nutcracker*; *The Lion*; *Verso*; *Black Light*; *Born for This* (LA and Boston); *50 Shades! The Musical*; *Ivy + Bean The Musical*; *Voca People*; and *Colin Quinn: Long Story Short*.

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJ PAC), located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, is among the largest performing arts centers in the United States. It is the artistic, cultural, educational, and civic center of New Jersey — where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. As New Jersey's Town Square, NJ PAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the State's and the world's best artists, while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive arts education programs, NJ PAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts.

NJ PAC has attracted more than 10.5 million visitors since opening its doors in 1997, reached almost two million children and families through its education and community programs, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit www.njpac.org for more information.

EVA PRICE (*Executive Producer*) is an NYCLU/ACLU honoree and a three-time Tony Award-winning producer. Her productions have garnered four Olivier Awards, two Grammy Awards, two Emmy Awards, and 19 Tony Awards. Current and upcoming: *& Juliet* (Broadway), *Jagged Little Pill* (National Tour), *Titanique* (Off-Broadway); *Mindplay* (Geffen Playhouse), and *A Transparent Musical* (Center Theatre Group). Selected credits: *Jagged Little Pill*, *Oklahoma!* (Tony Award, best musical revival, national tour, London); *Mr. Saturday Night*, *Tina – The Tina Turner Musical*, *What the Constitution Means to Me*, *Angels in America* (Tony Award, best play revival); *Dear Evan Hansen* (Tony Award, best musical); *On Your Feet!*; *Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons on Broadway!*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Colin Quinn Long Story Short*, *Annie*, *The Merchant of Venice* starring Al Pacino, Carrie Fisher's *Wishful Drinking*, *The Addams Family*, as well as solo shows and concerts starring The Temptations and The Four Tops, Kathy Griffin, Lewis Black, and Hershey Felder. Off-Broadway: *Sanctuary City* (NYTW); *Cruel Intentions: The '90s Musical* (Le Poisson Rouge; National Tour); *Found*; *The Lion*; and Bess Wohl's critically acclaimed *Small Mouth Sounds*. International/ Touring: *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* (Emmy Award for PBS special live capture); *The Magic School Bus, Live!: The Climate Challenge*; *Ella*, a bio musical about the life and music of Ella Fitzgerald. For five years, Price worked as an assignment editor and coordinating producer for special projects at *ABC News*, spending her last year producing and reporting on stories relating to Broadway for abcnews.com.

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