JEWELS FESTIVAL PRESENTS

THE NUTCRACKER 2026

Ballet in Two Acts



SUGAR PLUM FAIRY

Risa Mochizuki

Principal Ballet Dancer



CAVALIER

Albert Davydov

Principal Ballet Dancer



MARIE

Ariella Buznik

School of Ballet - Duet



NUTCRACKER

Kirill Zaharchenko

Joffrey Ballet School



MOUSE QUEEN

Izabella Azbel

School of Ballet - Duet



DEW DROP

Gabriella Cassesi

American Youth Ballet



SNOW QUEEN

Sabina Goldberg

Private student of Yuriy Vodolaga and Irina Dvorovenko

JEWELS FESTIVAL PRESENTS · **THE NUTCRACKER 2026**

❄ **FULL CAST** ❄

ACT I

Party Scene

Marie
Ariella Buznik (School of Ballet - Duet)

Drosselmeyer
Albert Davydov

Francesca (Marie's sister)
Elizabeth Levin (School of Ballet - Duet)

Big Dolls
Ballerina — Zarina Vahidova (School of Ballet - Duet)
Harlequin — Ofelia Yanyuk (Philadelphia Dance Conservatory)
Soldier — Varvara Britkovskaia (Philadelphia Dance Conservatory)

Little Dolls (School of Ballet - Duet)
Arabian Doll — Tiffany Rakhmonova
Chinese Doll — Sofi Ponezhda
Russian Doll — Olivia Voller

Children's Dance (American Youth Ballet)
Kaelyn Shean · Anya Olsen · Sara Schwartz · Mina Irani-Tehrani · Elsa Irani-Tehrani · Sofia Bobkov · Zaria Kalan · Gabriella Cassesi

Louisa Variation
Sara Schwartz (American Youth Ballet)

Victoria Variation
Sofia Bobkov (American Youth Ballet)

Alice Variation
Kaelyn Shean (American Youth Ballet)

Countess Stahlbaum
Julia Vorobyeva

Battle Scene

Mouse Queen
Izabella Azbel (School of Ballet - Duet)

Nutcracker
Kirill Zaharchenko (Joffrey Ballet School)

Marie
Ariella Buznik (School of Ballet - Duet)

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❄ **FULL CAST** ❄

Mice
Elizabeth Levin (School of Ballet - Duet)
Zarina Vahidova (School of Ballet - Duet)
Varvara Britkovskaia (Philadelphia Dance Conservatory)

Soldiers (School of Ballet - Duet)
Tiffany Rakhmonova · Lola Nemat · Sofi Ponezhda · Olivia Voller · Nikol Kurchak · Emily Gortolomei

Mice (School of Ballet - Duet)
Anna Sibiryanova · Elizabeth Toivio · Brigitte Belorusets · Madison Kleinman · Olivia Ramaglia · Olivia Conigliaro · Giselle Kanfer · Ofelia Yanyuk (Philadelphia Dance Conservatory)

Snow Scene

Snow Queen
Sabina Goldberg

Cavalier
Albert Davydov

Marie
Ariella Buznik

Nutcracker
Kirill Zaharchenko (Joffrey Ballet School)

Snowflakes (American Youth Ballet)
Kaelyn Shean · Anya Olsen · Sara Schwartz · Mina Irani-Tehrani · Elsa Irani-Tehrani · Sofia Bobkov · Zaria Kalan · Gabriella Cassesi

Little Snowflakes
Mia Rodriguez · Layla Olsen · Ellie Kim · Veranina Hegdal · Stella Larios · Ada Schinke

ACT II

Angels (School of Ballet - Duet)
Tiffany Rakhmonova · Lola Nemat · Sofi Ponezhda · Olivia Voller · Nikol Kurchak · Emily Gortolomei · Jane Toivio

Opening

Marie
Ariella Buznik

JEWELS FESTIVAL PRESENTS · **THE NUTCRACKER 2026**

❄ FULL CAST ❄

Nutcracker
Kirill Zaharchenko (Joffrey Ballet School)

Dew Drop
Gabriella Cassesi (American Youth Ballet)

Spanish Dance (Chocolate)
Soloist (Philadelphia Dance Conservatory)
Varvara Britkovskaia
with dancers of School of Ballet - Duet:
Olivia Voller · Tiffany Rakhmonova · Sofi Ponezhda · Emily Gortolomei · Lola Nemat · Nikol Kurchak

Variation — Fairy of Beauty
Anya Olsen (American Youth Ballet)

Chinese Dance (Tea) (School of Ballet - Duet)
Giselle Kanfer
Brigitte Belorusets · Madison Kleinman · Olivia Ramaglia · Olivia Conigliaro

Variation — Fairy of Grace
Elsa Irani-Tehrani (American Youth Ballet)

Arabian Dance (Coffee) (School of Ballet - Duet)
Anna Sibiryanova · Elizabeth Toivio

Brigitte Belorusets · Madison Kleinman · Olivia Ramaglia · Olivia Conigliaro

Variation — Fairy of Magic
Gabriella Cassesi (American Youth Ballet)

French Dance (Mirlitons) (School of Ballet - Duet)
Ariella Buznik · Elizabeth Levin · Zarina Vahidova · Izabella Azbel

Russian Dance (Trepak)
Soloist (Philadelphia Dance Conservatory)
Ofelia Yanyuk
with dancers of School of Ballet - Duet:
Olivia Voller · Tiffany Rakhmonova · Nikol Kurchak · Lola Nemat

Clowns (American Youth Ballet)
Mia Rodriguez · Layla Olsen · Ellie Kim · Veranina Hegdal · Stella Larios · Ada Schinke

Waltz of the Flowers (American Youth Ballet)
Gabriella Cassesi — Dew Drop · Kaelyn Shean · Anya Olsen · Sara Schwartz · Mina Irani-Tehrani · Elsa Irani-Tehrani · Sofia Bobkov · Zaria Kalan

Sugar Plum Variation
Zarina Vahidova (School of Ballet - Duet)

❄ FULL CAST ❄

Pas de Deux

Sugar Plum Fairy
Risa Mochizuki

Cavalier
Albert Davydov

Finale

All dancers

THE STORY OF THE NUTCRACKER

Act I. On Christmas Eve, Marie receives a very special gift from her godfather — a Nutcracker. That night, as the Christmas tree grows to an enormous size, Marie finds herself in the middle of a battle between the Nutcracker and the Mouse Queen's army. The Nutcracker defeats the Mouse Queen, is transformed into a Prince, and leads Marie through the sparkling Kingdom of Snow, where the Snow Queen and the Snowflakes dance for them.

Act II. The Prince brings Marie to the Land of Sweets, where the Sugar Plum Fairy welcomes them with a celebration of dances from around the world — Spanish, Arabian, Chinese, Russian, the Dance of the Reed Flutes, and Mother Gigogne with her children. The festivities culminate in the Waltz of the Flowers and the grand pas de deux of the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier. Marie awakens — was it all a dream, or a Christmas miracle?

OUR SOLOISTS

Risa Mochizuki

SUGAR PLUM FAIRY · PRINCIPAL BALLET DANCER

Born in Tokyo, Risa Mochizuki trained at the Kishibe and Kawasaki Ballet Schools and the Royal Ballet School of Flanders. She won Silver at the YAGP Finals in New York (2007), Gold at the World Ballet Competition in Orlando (2015) and Bronze at the VKIBC in New York (2015). After soloist and principal roles in Europe, she joined New Jersey Ballet in 2014, where she is a principal dancer.

Albert Davydov

CAVALIER · PRINCIPAL BALLET DANCER

Born in Russia, Albert Davydov trained at the Kazan Choreographic School, where he was awarded a Presidential Scholarship. After graduating, he became a principal dancer with the Tatar State Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Kazan, where he danced for three years, and then a principal dancer with New Jersey Ballet for fifteen years. He is a prize-winner at international ballet competitions. His repertoire included leading roles in The Nutcracker, Giselle, The Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Don Quixote, Le Corsaire, Paquita, Shurale and many other ballets. He is Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Jewels Festival and Artistic Director of American Youth Ballet.

JEWELS FESTIVAL ROLE WINNERS

Two leading roles in this production were awarded as special prizes at the Jewels Festival 11th Petite Edition: Ariella Buznik won the role of Marie, and Sabina Goldberg won the role of Snow Queen.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Gabriella Cassesi

DEW DROP · AMERICAN YOUTH BALLET

Gabriella Cassesi is a senior student at American Youth Ballet. In this production she appears as the Dew Drop.

To our senior — may your last year be as graceful as your dance. Wishing you a final school year filled with joy, courage and unforgettable moments on stage. May every step lead you toward your dreams!

OUR SCHOOLS

American Youth Ballet

Founded in 2010 by Natasha Bar and renamed American Youth Ballet in 2012, the school trains its students in the Vaganova technique. Under Artistic Director Albert Davydov — a graduate of the Kazan Choreographic School who was a principal dancer with the Tatar State Theatre of Opera and Ballet for three years and with New Jersey Ballet for fifteen years — his students have won multiple awards at ballet competitions and gone on to professional companies. American Youth Ballet is proud to collaborate on this first Jewels Festival production of The Nutcracker.

2130 State Route 94, Salisbury Mills, NY · (973) 444-4865 · aybballet.com

School of Ballet - Duet (Vaganova Method)

School of Ballet – Duet, located in Brooklyn, New York, offers professional ballet education based on the renowned Vaganova Method. The school's Founder and Director, Julia Vorobyeva, is a graduate of the Bolshoi Ballet Academy. During her professional career as a soloist and principal dancer, she performed numerous leading roles in classical ballets, including Giselle, The Sleeping Beauty, Esmeralda, The Nutcracker, and many more. The school prepares students for participation in prestigious ballet competitions, including YAGP and the Jewels Festival, as well as stage performances and productions. Our training also provides students with a strong foundation for pursuing higher education at prestigious dance colleges and universities, as well as future professional careers in ballet and the performing arts. The school also offers Spring and Summer Intensives, as well as the Catskills Ballet Camp (CBC), a residential summer ballet camp in the Catskill Mountains.

2102 Avenue Z, Brooklyn, NY 11235 · (973) 885-2776 · duetballet.com

Philadelphia Dance Conservatory

Founded in 2003 in Pennsylvania by Altynay Mazhikeyeva, the Philadelphia Dance Conservatory preserves the traditions of classical ballet while embracing the evolution of dance. The Conservatory presents full-length classical ballets and original productions, and its students represent the school in solo, duet, and ensemble categories at competitions and festivals including YAGP and the Jewels Festival.

1728 Bridgetown Pike, Feasterville-Trevose, PA 19053 · (215) 380-9260 · philadelphiadanceconservatory.com

Joffrey Ballet School

Founded in New York City in 1953 by Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino, the Joffrey Ballet School has been at the forefront of American dance education for over seventy years. Located in Greenwich Village, the school trains dancers for professional careers, and its graduates dance with major classical and contemporary companies in the United States and abroad. The school is represented in this production by Kirill Zaharchenko, a fourth-year student, in the title role.

434 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10011 · (888) 438-3808 · joffreyballetschool.com

THANK YOU

Jewels Festival thanks our wonderful dancers, their teachers and families, and the Cultural Arts Theatre for making this first production possible.

COMING SOON

Jewels Festival — April 2027

Our next ballet competition edition — see you in the spring!

CBC – Catskills Ballet Camp • Winter Camp
December 23–30, 2026

MEET OUR SCHOOLS

American Youth Ballet
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Dear friends! Jewels Festival warmly congratulates all the dancers taking part in this production, their teachers and families — and thanks you, our dear audience, for sharing this evening with us. May this magical story fill your hearts with joy. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Jewels Festival
jewelsfestival.com