



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

THE NUTCRACKER

VISUAL STORY

Information about the show

Introduction to the characters

The story of *The Nutcracker*

This Visual Story uses accessible language and is intended to be used by all.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

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THE NUTCRACKER

The Nutcracker is a ballet so there is no speaking, and the story is told through dance and facial expressions. Sometimes the characters in the story get hurt, but it is all pretend and they are just performing.

Dancers may bow at the end of a dance piece, and people will clap; you can clap with them if you want to.

RUNNING TIMES

The performance lasts about 2 hours 30 minutes, including one interval.

INTRODUCTION 10 minutes

FIRST HALF 50 minutes

INTERVAL 30 minutes

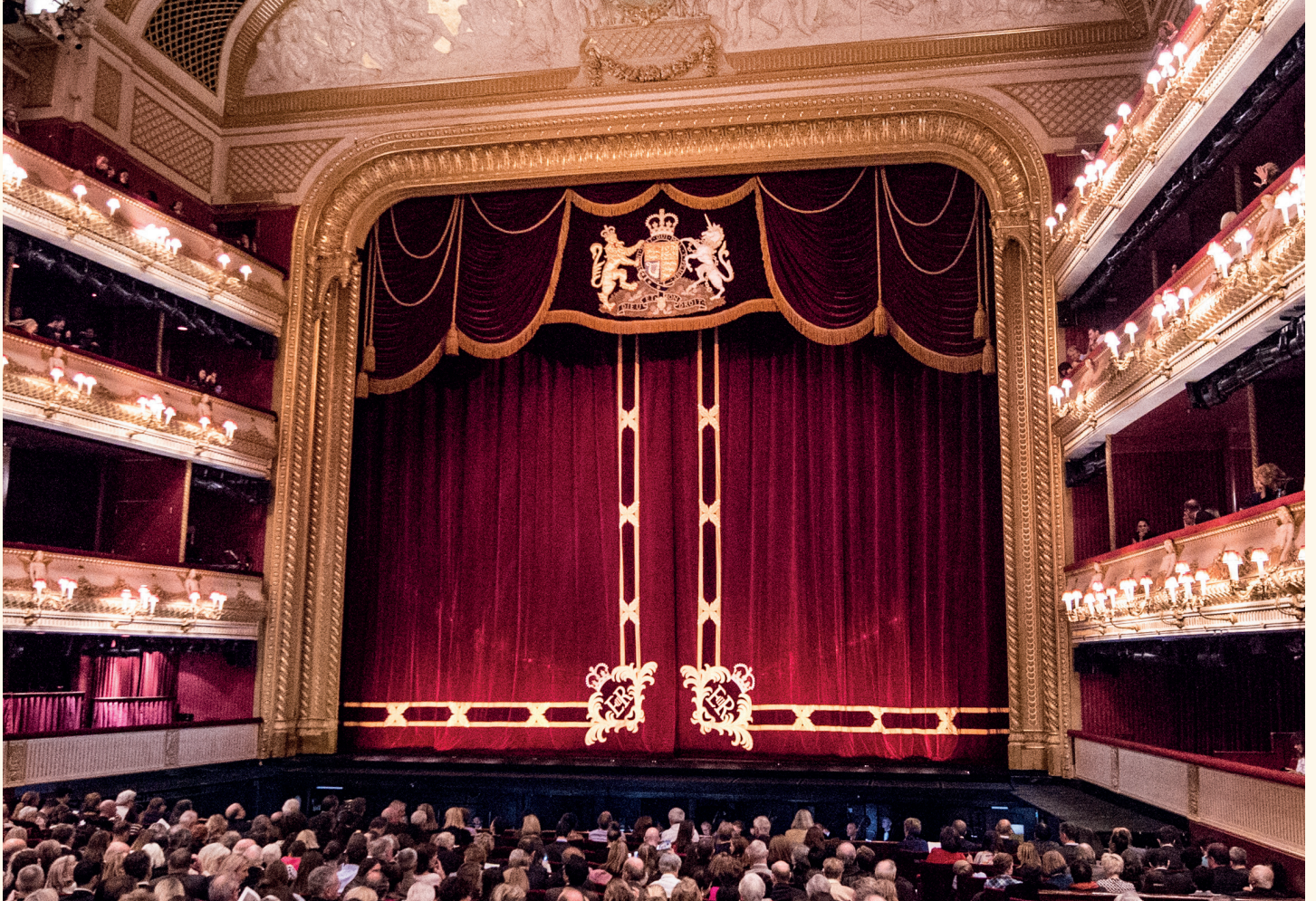
SECOND HALF 55 minutes



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THE STAGE

In front of the stage there is a safety curtain, it is red velvet and looks like this:



This is a big curtain that covers the whole stage.

It will lift to reveal the stage. It will come down for the interval. An interval is a break in the performance. During this time you can walk around, eat and take a break. At the end of the interval, it will lift again for the second half.

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THE ORCHESTRA

The Nutcracker is a ballet with music throughout the performance.

The people making the music are called the musicians, and together they are an orchestra.

For the performance, they will be sitting in the 'pit'. This is an area in the front of the stage that is lower than the seats. You can see them from some seats, but not from others. You do not need to see what they are doing, but you will hear them.

They will stay in the pit for the show and not get up on the stage.

There will be a person standing in front of the orchestra in the pit. They are called the conductor and they guide the orchestra through the music.



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BEFORE THE STORY STARTS

Gary, the dancer playing the character Herr Drosselmeyer, will come on stage and say hello. He will then ask some of the dancers to come out and say hello. These are the dancers who are playing the other characters.

They will tell you which character they play and bring out some items that might seem scary, like a toy gun, to show us they are just pretend and that nobody will get hurt by them.



Remember, this is a fantasy story. It is not real and it is happening in a world that is not real. This is a story, and the dancers are pretending to be other people or creatures.

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THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE NUTCRACKER SHOW

The Nutcracker is performed by lots of dancers from The Royal Ballet. They all perform as characters, in the background, in groups or on their own. These characters might change their costumes in different scenes but they are still acting as the same person.

Here are some of the main characters that you will see dancing in the show. Some of the dancers are playing the part of their character for the first time in this show. Some of the pictures of characters in costume below will not be of the dancer playing the role, but will give you an idea of what their costume will look like. Sometimes a different dancer will play the role if the original dancer is ill or injured. You can check this on the cast sheet.

CLARA is played by Viola Pantuso

Clara is a young girl who receives a Nutcracker doll as a gift from her uncle at Christmas. She is compassionate and brave.



This is a picture of the dancer



This is what the character will look like in the show

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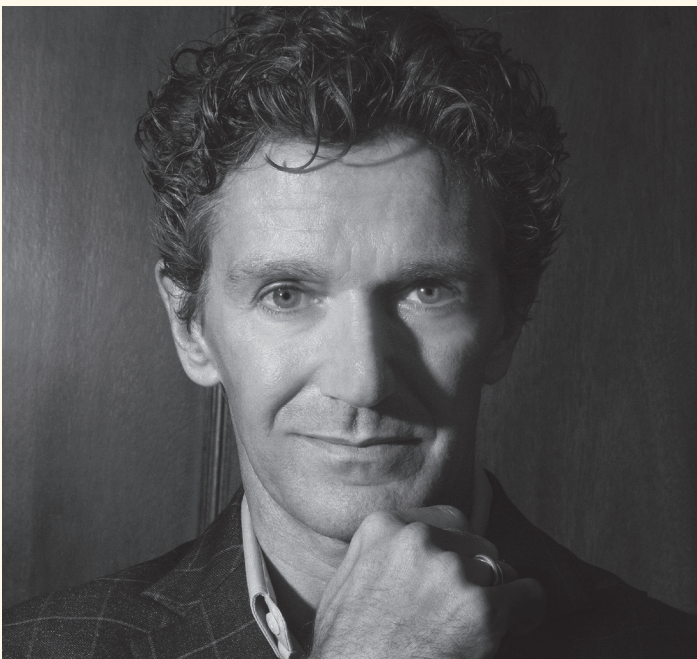
FRITZ is played by a student from The Royal Ballet School

Clara dances with friends and family at the Christmas party. One of them is her brother Fritz. He is energetic and cheeky.



HERR DROSSELMAYER is played by Gary Avis

Herr Drosselmeyer is Clara's uncle. He makes beautiful toys and gifts in his workshop, like the Nutcracker doll that he gives to Clara. Herr Drosselmeyer also has magical powers.



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DROSSELMAYER'S ASSISTANT is played by Joshua Junker
Drosselmeyer's assistant brings the gifts to the party. He is very playful. He wears a mask for part of the show.



THE NUTCRACKER / HANS-PETER is played by Daichi Ikarashi
The Nutcracker doll turns into a young soldier called Hans-Peter when Clara saves him. He is Clara's friend, and he leads her through a magical Land of Snow to the Kingdom of Sweets.



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THE MOUSE KING is played by Harry Churches

The Mouse King leads the mice army as they fight against the Nutcracker and soldiers. He seems scary, but he is defeated by Clara.



THE SUGAR PLUM FAIRY is played by Mariko Sasaki

She is a beautiful fairy from the magical Kingdom of Sweets. She is very elegant, and thankful to Clara and Hans-Peter for their bravery. She gifts them with presents and dances.



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THE PRINCE is played by Joseph Sissens

He is the Sugar Plum Fairy's companion. He rules the magical Kingdom of Sweets with her. They dance a grand duet together.



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THE STORY

THE FIRST HALF: ACT 1

The story starts in Herr Drosselmeyer's workshop on Christmas Eve. He is wrapping gifts. Drosselmeyer's assistant appears to deliver the gifts. Herr Drosselmeyer looks at the painting of his nephew, Hans-Peter, on his wall. It begins to move! Hans-Peter has been trapped by a spell which turned him into a nutcracker doll. Only the love of a brave, kind girl can save him. Herr Drosselmeyer wraps up the nutcracker doll and leaves.



Two women arrive at a house on a sled and a group of children run up to them. They are entering the house for a Christmas party. Drosselmeyer's assistant arrives too.



We are now in Clara's family home at their Christmas party. We meet Clara and her brother. There is dancing, and the children receive gifts. Then Herr Drosselmeyer arrives with his own gifts, including life-sized dolls that dance and a nutcracker doll for Clara.



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Clara loves the Nutcracker, but her brother Fritz takes it from her and breaks it. Herr Drosselmeyer is angry, but he fixes the doll and gives it back to Clara. Then the party ends, and the family goes to bed.



It is now night time, and Clara sneaks downstairs to check on her nutcracker doll. The clock strikes midnight. Other toys start dancing and Herr Drosselmeyer appears again. He uses magic to make the Christmas tree grow very large. Toy soldiers also come to life.



Clara sees a battle start between the toy soldiers and an army of mice. The Mouse King and the Nutcracker fight. Clara runs to stop the fight and hits the Mouse King with her slipper. The mice are defeated, but the Nutcracker is hurt. When he gets up, he is not wearing a mask anymore. He is no longer a nutcracker doll but a young man called Hans-Peter. He is happy to see Clara. They dance together.



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Clara and Hans-Peter (who used to be the Nutcracker) go into the snowy forest. They see angels and snowflakes dance and join in. Then Clara and the Nutcracker get on a sleigh led by an angel and are taken away.



This is the end of the first half of the ballet.

The red velvet curtain will come back down in front of the stage. Some people will clap, you can clap if you would like to.

INTERVAL

This is now the interval, and you can stay in your seat or leave your seat. A member of staff will remind you to go back to your seat for the second half.

THE SECOND HALF: ACT 2

Act 2 starts with the angels dancing, then the curtain goes up to show a sparkling palace.

Herr Drosselmeyer enters the palace and introduces Hans-Peter and Clara to the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Prince. Hans-Peter explains that he was turned into a nutcracker doll and saved from the Mouse King by Clara. The Sugar Plum Fairy gives Clara a necklace and Hans-Peter a medal.



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Characters perform a series of dances from around the world to welcome them to the palace, and then they all dance together. They all run off except Herr Drosselmeyer, Clara and the angel.



Clara falls asleep and Herr Drosselmeyer lays her down. He disappears behind the clock. Clara wakes up in her own house again. Maybe it was all a dream.



She goes outside in the snow and a young man who looks like Hans-Peter offers her his cloak. He is lost and Clara shows him the right direction. They look at each other. Clara realises she still has the necklace that the Sugar Plum Fairy gave her.



In his workshop, Herr Drosselmeyer looks at the painting. The young man enters and Herr Drosselmeyer realises it is his nephew. The spell has been broken and they are reunited. They hug.



This is the end of the show. The dancers will come back on stage and bow. You can clap if you would like to, but you do not have to.

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