



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARTS San Antonio presents

Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*

Performed by Metropolitan Classical Ballet

with San Antonio Metropolitan Ballet

Lila Cockrell Theatre, San Antonio

Four performances, Friday through Sunday, December 16-18

Tickets are on sale now.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS – Prima Ballerinas **Olga Pavlova** and **Marina Goshko** and Principal Dancers **Yevgeni Anfinogenov** and **Andrey Prikhodko** will star in ARTS San Antonio's presentation of **Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*** this December 16, 17 and 18 at the newly renovated Lila Cockrell Theatre. Tickets, starting at \$20, may be purchased at Ticketmaster.com by calling (800) 745-3000, at the Alamodome Box Office (210) 207-3663 or at all Ticketmaster outlets.

Set to Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky's beloved score, *The Nutcracker* is, by far, the most widely attended ballet in America. The first American production of the ballet was staged in 1944 by the San Francisco Ballet. Ten years later, the late George Balanchine introduced his famous production of *The Nutcracker* at the New York City Ballet, a staging largely responsible for the ballet becoming part of the Christmas tradition in the United States. Balanchine, co-founder and balletmaster of New York City Ballet, is regarded as the foremost contemporary choreographer in the world of ballet.

This production of *The Nutcracker* is choreographed and directed by Artistic Director of the Metropolitan Classical Ballet **Paul Mejia**, a well-recognized name in ballet. Mejia is a former principal dancer under George Balanchine at the New York City Ballet. He

danced principal roles in many Balanchine ballets. Mejia's production of *The Nutcracker* continues the holiday tradition of this very popular ballet.

Mejia began his dance training as a student at the School of American Ballet under the tutelage and inspiration of the great master George Balanchine. At the age of eleven, he danced the roles of Fritz and the Little Prince in Balanchine's *Nutcracker*. By the time he reached the age of eighteen, and had joined the New York City Ballet, Mr. Mejia had danced most of the male roles in *The Nutcracker* culminating in the principal role of the Cavalier, and dancing the grand pas de deux with the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Dedicated to the artistic vision and philosophy of George Balanchine, Mr. Mejia choreographed *The Nutcracker* in 1988 when he was the artistic director for the Ft. Worth Dallas Ballet. Today, Mr. Mejia's three young children are dancing those same children's roles, and continuing the rich American tradition.

Olga Pavlova, Marina Goshko, Andre Prikhodko, Yevgeni Anfinoginov, and Roman Nikofovrov will dance the various principal roles in *The Nutcracker*. Students from the San Antonio Metropolitan Classical Ballet will dance the numerous children's roles.

Russian Prima Ballerina Olga Pavlova is hailed as "The New Pavlova" by *Dance magazine*, referring to the famous Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova. Born in Moscow, Russia, Olga Pavlova graduated from the famed Bolshoi Ballet Academy. Olga Pavlova won the Gold Medal and the First Prize at the Maya Mikhailovna Plisetskaya Second International Ballet Competition in St. Petersburg, Russia and the Diploma at the Rudolf Nureyev Second International Ballet Competition in Budapest, Hungary.

Marina Goshko, Russian native, was born in Ulan-Ude in the republic of Buryatiya. She graduated from the Buryat State Choreographic School in 1992. In 1993, she became a soloist with the Moscow Classical Ballet. Ms. Goshko has toured extensively throughout the world. Her repertoire includes leading solo and pas de deux roles. In 2001, she joined Metropolitan Classical Ballet as a principal dancer. Ms. Goshko is married to dancer Andrey Prikhodko.

Yevgeni Anfinogenov was born in Moscow, Russia. He graduated from the prestigious Perm State Ballet Academy and joined the Russian Chamber Ballet Theater of Moscow. He was First Soloist with Moscow City Ballet and the Russian National Ballet Theater and Principal Dancer with Metropolitan Classical Ballet. He has performed extensively throughout the world. He is married to Prima Ballerina Olga Pavlova.

Andrey Prikhodko, was born in Polovinny, Sverdlovsk Region, Russia in 1976. He graduated from the Perm State Ballet Academy in 1994, and was accepted into the ballet troupe of Grand Moscow Classical Ballet of Natalia Kasatkina and Vladimir Vasilyov. Prikhodko is married to dancer Marina Goshko. Prikhodko has been a Principal Dancer with Metropolitan Classical Ballet since 2001.

Roman Nikofovrov will perform the role of Drosselmeyer.

Founded in 1997, **Metropolitan Classical Ballet** has performed for more than 30,000 individuals each season. Paul Mejia has been Executive Director of the Company since 2001 and Artistic Director since 2002.

San Antonio Metropolitan Ballet (SAMB) is a pre-professional ballet company. **Susan Beil Connally**, in her seventeenth year as Artistic Director, is also the Artistic Director and principal teacher for Connally's Dance Workshop, Inc., founded in 1976. SAMB presents two major productions each season: a fairy tale story ballet in the fall and *Dance Kaleidoscope*, an official Fiesta San Antonio event that encompasses both classical and contemporary dance, in the spring. **Karin L. Connally**, Associate Director and Administrator for SAMB since 2004, has been a dance instructor for nineteen years and is a faculty member of Connally's Dance Workshop, Inc. and SAMB.

SAMB annually advertises and conducts city-wide auditions for children and students to perform roles in ARTS SA's presentation of *the Nutcracker*. In 2011 auditions will be conducted on Sunday, September 18 at SAMB. Students work side-by-side with the professional artists of Metropolitan Classical Ballet. This type of program is unique in San Antonio.

The performance schedule:

- Friday, December 16 at 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday December 17 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday December 18, 2011 at 2:00 p.m.

This performance is part of ARTS San Antonio's Whole Enchilada performance series available for purchase through ARTS SA.

Tickets prices start at \$20. Tickets may be purchased by calling (800) 745-3000, by visiting Ticketmaster.com, at the Alamodome Box Office (210) 207-3663, 100 Montana Street and at all Ticketmaster outlets. For information on the performance or to purchase season or series tickets, call ARTS SA at (210) 226-2891, visit Majestic Theatre Tower Suite 400, 222 East Houston Street or visit ArtsSA.org.

ARTS San Antonio is a leading non-profit presenter of performing arts in the South Texas region. ARTS San Antonio performances are supported by the San Antonio Office of Cultural Affairs, San Antonio Express-News, Texas Commission on the Arts and theFund. ARTS SA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to the education, enrichment and entertainment of the people, especially the children, of greater San Antonio. Net proceeds from these performances make possible performing arts and ARTsTEach arts education classroom workshops in area elementary schools.

ARTS San Antonio

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