

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS  
THE AMERICAN PREMIERE OF *NUTCRACKER!*  
MATTHEW BOURNE'S INGENUOUS INTERPRETATION OF THE *NUTCRACKER* BALLET

ONLY ON THE WEST COAST THIS SEASON  
NOVEMBER 26 – DECEMBER 5 IN ZELLERBACH HALL

**BERKELEY, October 8, 2004** – “Hats off to **Matthew Bourne**—his *Nutcracker!* is the most enjoyable and clever staging imaginable,” raves *The Times* (London) of the British choreographer’s dazzling and daring reinvention of the holiday ballet, which has its United States premiere **November 26 – December 5** at Cal Performances in Zellerbach Hall. Bourne’s trademark wit, energetic choreography and theatrical magic—first introduced to Bay Area audiences in October 2001 with his incendiary dance/theater production *The Car Man*—are at work again in this highly imaginative take that turns the yuletide classic on its head. In Bourne’s *Nutcracker* world, scenes of a bleak Christmas Eve in an orphanage straight out of Dickens transform into the eye-popping wonderland of the Liquorice Allsorts, Gobstoppers and Marshmallow Girls, and a glittering frozen pond sets the stage for a fantastic dance—or skate—of the Snowflakes. The splendid **Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky** score sweeps Bourne’s delicious holiday punchbowl—equal parts *Oliver Twist*, *Ice Capades* and *Busby Berkeley* musical—along to its glorious finish. The extraordinary theatrical skill of Bourne’s **New Adventures** dancers gives fresh life to the familiar story of Clara, joining Mark Morris Dance Group’s acclaimed *Hard Nut* in the repertory of alternative *Nutcrackers* Cal Performances has brought to the Bay Area. *Nutcracker!* visits the West Coast only for its first American tour, premiering at Cal Performances, moving next to the Orange County Performing Arts Center December 7-12, and concluding at UCLA Live December 15 through January 2.

***NUTCRACKER!***

Choreographer and Director Matthew Bourne wanted to remain true to the essence of the plot of the 1892 Petipa/Ivanov *Nutcracker* story ballet, and create a work that would skillfully unfold a tender coming-of-age story through the dreams—both splendid and peculiar—of young

Clara. Bourne's first incarnation of *Nutcracker!* was presented at the 1992 Edinburgh Festival as part of the ballet's numerous centenary celebrations. The production, the choreographer's first interpretation of a full-length story ballet was so well received it was brought back to Sadler's Wells in London in 1993 and 1994. Unexpectedly, *Nutcracker!* set Bourne on the path to creating other soon-to-be well-known alternative productions of popular ballets, including *Swan Lake*, *La Sylphide*, *Cinderella*, and *The Car Man*. Ten years after its first showing, Bourne revisited *Nutcracker!*, substantially re-choreographing the work and incorporating updated set designs by Anthony Ward. "It is very much a new production...our aim has been to take a fresh look at every aspect of the show while retaining the innocence and charm of the original production," Bourne said in a recent interview. "Ten years on I find Tchaikovsky's music more and more profound—its magic turns us all into kids again." The new *Nutcracker!* has enjoyed enormous success, breaking all box office records when it came to Sadler's Wells in 2002. "A joy from start to finish" (*Time Out*); "skilled and touching performances" (*Financial Times*); "luxuriant, witty" (*The Guardian*); "rich, funny and surprising" (*Daily Telegraph*); and "a brilliant family show" (*Evening Standard*) are just some of the praises the English press has written about the show.

Bourne's *Nutcracker!* turns the original ballet on its head. Clara's story does not begin in the home of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century bourgeois family, but in a dreary orphanage, run by the cruel Mr. and Mrs. Dross. Fritz and Sugar are the Dross' spoiled children, who are intent on terrorizing all the detainees, and the Nutcracker is not a toy-turned prince but a fellow orphan upon whom Clara has a crush. Christmas morning Clara, young Nutcracker and the rest of the orphans stage a revolt and escape the orphanage, and the rest of the story is a fantastic journey towards a blissful ending, where Marshmallow Girls, Gobstoppers, Liquoice Allsorts, Knickerbocker Glory, Cupids and ice skating orphans replace the traditional ballet's flowers, snowflakes and international dancers. "Act 2 is a deliriously camp riot of pink, oozing ice cream sexiness and an Absolutely Fabulous sense of girly satire," cheered the *Daily Telegraph*. "So pretty, so funny, so frisky and good-hearted—Matthew Bourne's *Nutcracker!* has just about everything desirable in a Christmas show," added the *Evening Standard*. "Very few ballet productions send you home feeling as good about life as this one."

## CAST, DIRECTORS AND ARTISTS

The extraordinary scenic design and costumes for *Nutcracker!* are by **Anthony Ward**, whose numerous credits include the recent London productions of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *My Fair Lady*; *The Makropoulos Case* for the Metropolitan Opera; *Les Rendezvous* for the Royal Ballet; and the film *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, among many others. Lighting is designed by **Howard Harrison**, and a recording by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra will accompany this production.

The cast of *Nutcracker!* features solos by Dr. Dross/King Sherbert, Dr. Dross' wife/Queen Candy, Sugar/Princess Sugar, Fritz/Prince Bon-Bon, Clara and Nutcracker. Casting for the Berkeley performances will be announced. The company members—30 in all—join the principals as Cupids, Orphans, Liquorice Allsorts, Knickerbocker Glory, Marshmallow Girls, and Gobstoppers.

## MATTHEW BOURNE

Englishman **Matthew Bourne** was Director and Choreographer of Adventures in Motion Pictures from 1987 to 2002; and Director of New Adventures from 2002, when the company was renamed, to present. Both ventures have established Bourne as one of Britain's most innovative and popular dance/theater artists, winning numerous awards for his groundbreaking work, both at home and abroad. Bourne is the only British director to have won the Tony Award for Best Director and Best Choreographer in the same year (1999, for *Swan Lake*).

Major theater works include *Overlap Lovers*, *Spitfire*, *Buck and Wing*, *The Infernal Gallop*, *Town and Country*, *Deadly Serious*, *The Percys of Gitzrovia*, *Highland Fling*, *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella*, *The Car Man*, and *Nutcracker!*. Film work includes *Late Flowering Lust*, *Drip*, *The Car Man*, *Nutcracker!*, *Swan Lake*, and Roald Dahl's *Little Red Riding Hood*. England's Channel 4 documentary, *Bourne to Dance*, was completed in 2001.

Bourne has been associated with a myriad of other theater work, from *Oliver!* to *The Tempest*. As well as creating roles for major dancers like Lynn Seymour and Adam Cooper, Bourne has made dances for many leading actors, including Sir Nigel Hawthorne, Julie Walters

and Jonathan Pryce. He choreographed blockbuster productions of *My Fair Lady* and *South Pacific* at the Royal National Theatre directed by Trevor Nunn, and his work on the Disney Theatrical Production of *Mary Poppins* is on the eve of opening at the Prince Edward Theatre in London. In 2003 Bourne was the recipient of the prestigious Hamburg Shakespeare Prize for the Arts.

### NEW ADVENTURES

Under the guidance of Matthew Bourne and co-director **Robert Noble**, **New Adventures** was launched in 2002 to create and perform both large and small-scale work by Matthew Bourne. Its first work, *Play Without Words*, is a pointed satire of class conflict and sexual mores set in 1960s London. Choreographed for 15 dancers to a swinging jazz score by Terry Davies, the production has its American Premiere at Cal Performances May 31 – June 5, 2005. Future projects include the revival of Bourne's highly acclaimed *Highland Fling* and a new version of the Tim Burton/Danny Elfman film *Edward Scissorhands*, to be premiered in Britain in fall 2005.

### TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Matthew Bourne's *Nutcracker!*** in Zellerbach Hall **Friday, November 26 – Sunday, December 5** are priced at **\$36.00, \$52.00, and \$74.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu).

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