

# North Country Ballet Ensemble Nutcracker Policies

Updated 2016

## Auditions

### ***Background***

From NCBE's By-Laws, Article II(I) Purposes

*"...to provide performing experience for young aspiring local dancers who are dedicated to the art of ballet, to offer them a means by which to gain experience through practice and performance."*

The North Country Ballet Ensemble's annual holiday performance, *The Nutcracker*, is an important production for NCBE. It provides young, aspiring, local dancers the opportunity to dance in a classical ballet, perform in corps and small ensemble pieces, and dance along side professionals.

The artistic director reviews the overall composition of the production from several view points including size and staging of the corps and ensemble pieces, dramatic impact, cohesiveness, as well as the talents and desires of the performers themselves.

### ***Policy***

*The Nutcracker* is open to all North Country community members in school grades kindergarten through twelfth grade. Post High School students and adults are encouraged to participate in *The Nutcracker* as well.

All dancers Kindergarten through twelfth grade must participate in auditions as scheduled with their appropriate age level. All post high school dancers who are interested in roles are asked to contact the Artistic Director directly. All adult dancers who do not audition will be considered for Act I & II adult roles only. Roles that are deemed unfillable by the artistic staff will be discussed by the Board and Artistic staff in order to cast dancers who may not be able to attend all rehearsals or the audition and the board will have final decision.

All who audition, and who meet the requirements at the time of the audition (i.e. paperwork, fees, and attendance at meetings), will be cast in a role. All cast members must follow the attendance policy to maintain their casting.

The roles of Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier are reserved for professional dancers only. Professional dancers are defined as individuals whose primary income is generated by dancing. Non-professional dancers that can meet role guidelines may be considered on an individual basis. The Artistic Director shall select potential professional dancers and submit their names to the Board for final approval.

A late audition or inability to attend the audition may still result in casting on a case-by-case determination if the request is submitted to the Board and the Artistic Director prior to scheduled auditions.

The Artistic Director and his/her designees will conduct the audition in a safe, professional and non-biased manner. A member of the Board may be asked to be a silent observer at auditions.

# Casting

## *Background*

Casting is one of the most critical elements in *The Nutcracker* production, but one of the most difficult as well. Many dancers aspire to perform a certain role in *The Nutcracker* for many years; others look to the role as confirming their skills in, or enjoyment of, dance. It is also a community performance, one that NCBE strives to produce not solely as a performance vehicle for dancers, but also as a classical ballet of the highest quality for the enjoyment and entertainment of the audience.

These two needs must be balanced carefully during the casting process. As a result, Role Guidelines (**Exhibit A**) were developed as a way for NCBE to communicate to dancers the skill-sets necessary for a particular role in *The Nutcracker*. They also ensure that a dancer maintains a certain athletic fitness throughout the rehearsal season.

## *Policy*

Casting will be done by the Artistic Director, in consultation with her/his designees.

Factors affecting the role(s) cast for a dancer include:

- Audition performance
- Costume requirements
- Demonstrated work ethic
- Past performing experience
- Physical ability
- Production needs
- Role aspirations
- Teamwork and leadership

No role shall be cast based upon a dancer's her/his family's financial support of NCBE, relationship to Artistic Staff, relationship to NCBE's Board of Directors, or her/his family's participation (volunteer or otherwise) in *The Nutcracker* or other NCBE productions and/or activities.

All roles cast are subject to change at any time at the discretion of the Artistic Director.

Dancers not meeting a particular role guideline at audition time may be cast due to natural ability or onstage personality; however, they must meet and maintain the role guidelines throughout the rehearsal season.

By signing the audition form, a dancer agrees to accept all roles cast. Dancers not accepting a role forfeit the privilege of performing in *The Nutcracker*.

# Removal of a Dancer from the Production

## *Background*

*The Nutcracker* ballet requires the dedicated efforts of all participants. Each piece danced is a combination of an individual's skills, their interactions with other dancers, and a complex synthesis of these elements called stage presentation. Even the simplest of pieces requires lots and lots of practice to produce the desired result.

Rehearsal absences, consistent tardiness, failure to meet and maintain role guidelines, and violation of NCBE rules and guidelines can adversely affect the entire production.

### ***Policy***

NCBE, its Artistic Staff and Board, reserves the right to remove from the production any dancer who's influence or actions are deemed harmful to themselves or others, and/or who will not follow the rules, policies, and/or guidelines of NCBE. If this occurs, no deduction or return of fee or any part thereof will be made.

The use of illegal drugs, tobacco, alcohol, fighting, foul or abusive language, gross misconduct, sexual harassment, or violation of NCBE rules, policies and/or guidelines are all examples of behavior that are grounds for immediate removal from the production.

The parents of any dancer removed from the production may request to meet with the NCBE Board of Directors. If any member of the Board of Directors is related to the dancer, he or she shall be disqualified from the decision and may only enter into discussions of the issue as deemed appropriate by other members of the board. The dancer, her or his parents, and any others deemed necessary by the Board of Directors may be asked to attend the meeting. The Board of Directors shall present the dancer and her or his family and the Artistic Director with its decision in writing within (5) days of the meeting. Any decision made by the Board of Directors shall be considered final.

## **Exhibit A**

### **North Country Ballet Ensemble Nutcracker Role Guidelines for Girls and Boys**

To maintain a high quality production, the North Country Ballet Ensemble has developed role guidelines. These guidelines help dancers avoid injury during the Nutcracker season. They pertain most to those who are dancing in more technical roles. The number of roles cast has to do with the number of classes registered for, and prior

dance experience. *There is no guarantee of a role based solely on the number of classes a dancer takes, or their ballet level in their studio.*

**\*Class means any form of dance, gymnastics or skating instruction**

**\*\*Pointe work required does not indicate that ALL dancers will be en pointe**

**Final Casting is made at the discretion of the Artistic Director.**

**Girls:**

**Children's Roles in *The Nutcracker Ballet***

**Upon accepting the role(s) it is suggested that you take the following:**

<b>Party Children</b>	<b>1 or more classes/wk</b>
<b>Claire's Friends</b>	<b>2 or more classes/wk</b>
<b>Mice and Soldiers</b>	<b>All ability levels needed</b>
<b>Polichinelles</b>	<b>2 or more classes/wk</b>
<b>Sugar Plum Attendants</b>	<b>1 or more classes/wk</b>
<b>Cherubs</b>	<b>1 or more classes/wk</b>
<b>Reindeer in Snow and Angel Scene</b>	<b>1 or more classes/wk</b>
<b>Snow</b>	<b>3-4 ballet classes/wk **Pointe work required</b>
<b>Waltz of the Flowers</b>	<b>2-4 ballet classes/wk **Pointe work required</b>

**Act 2 Divertissement Corps roles that require 2 or more classes/wk:**

**Spanish, Chinese Quartet, Russian, Little Waltz**

**Acts 1 & 2 Divertissement Featured roles that require 3-4 classes a week or permission of the Artistic Director**

**Claire, Claire's Angel, Battle Angel, Nutcracker, King Mouse & Mouse Major, Dolls, Angel Quartet, Chinese Trio, Candy Cane Quartet or Quintet, Arabian, Candy Cane Soloist, Spanish Soloist, Dew Drop Fairy**

**Boys Roles in *The Nutcracker Ballet*: Fritz, Party Boys, Soldiers, Prince, Page, Russian, Chinese**  
**Recommended that boys take class at a local studio during the rehearsal period of *The Nutcracker*.**