

Produced by Justine Ward-Hook

Meridian Little Theater December 6th at 6:30 December 7th at 2:00



= Act One =

Herr Stahlbaum and his wife are having a Christmas Party. Clara and Fritz, their children, greet the guests, dance and play games. Later, the mysterious Dr. Drosselmeyer, Clara's Godfather, arrives and entertains the children with his magical toys and wind-up dolls. Dr. Drosselmeyer brings a special gift for Clara - a wooden nutcracker. Fritz becomes jealous and tries to destroy her gift. The party ends, the guests leave, and the Stahlbaums retire for the night. Clara sneaks downstairs with her Nutcracker and falls asleep. Clara awakens as she hears noises around the Christmas trees and her toy dolls come to life. The clock strikes midnight. Suddenly, the room fills with a mouse army and a giant mouse who attacks Clara. Her valiant Nutcracker, now life size, comes to her rescue. The Mouse King attacks the Nutcracker, but Clara hits him with her shoe and the Nutcracker wins the battle. After the battle, the Nutcracker is transformed into a handsome prince. The Nutcracker Prince leads Clara on a journey through the Pine Forest to the Land of Snow. The Snow Queen and King dance with the Snowflakes. Clara and the Nutcracker Prince depart for the Kingdom of Sweets escorted by the snow angels.

The Christmas Party

1. Drosselmeyer's Toy Shop Jason Clayton (Drosselmeyer)
Diante Coker (Nephew)
Isabel Collier, Josie Shuler, Anna Cate Daugherty, Aiden Hook,
Lincoln Nelson, Atticus Meyers, Bellamy Meyers,
Tatum Kauerz, Maurie Simmons, Rose Mary Stump,
Lyra Zeller (Toys)

2. Decoration of the Tree Justine Hook (Fraus Stahlbaum)
Scott Hook (Herr Stahlbaum)

Chelsey Callahan and Laurie Purvis (Maids) Rilynn Fortner (Clara)

Aiden Hook (Fritz)

Rilynn Fortner, Isabel Collier, Maggie Newlin, Mia Ordway, Anna Cate Daugherty (Girls)

Aiden Hook, Roxie Kate Comans, Maggie McPherson, Louise Hannah, Eden Polson, Jane Newlin,

Catherine Miller, Lilly Nelson (Boys)

4. The March, Gallop, & Clara's Dance ... Party Children

5. Drosselmeyer & the Dolls Jason Clayton (Drosselmeyer) Diante Coker (Nephew) Merin Dew and Lincoln Nelson (Tiny Dancers) Rani Higgins and John Mingle (Mechanical Dolls) Laurie Purvis, Laykin Dew (Soldier Dolls) 6. Clara and her Nutcracker Rilynn Fortner (Clara) and all Party Children 7. Parent's Dance Scott Hook, Justine Hook, Jason Clayton, Cara Brand, Diante Coker, Rilynn Fortner, Amos Meyers, Hillary Meyers, Courtney Grant Clara's Dream 8. The Magic Spell Begins Rilynn Fortner (Clara) Millie Parker, Ellora Hajner, Brynn Castleberry, Emory Parker, Marion Wildman, Maura Lane Owen, Bellamy Meyers, Atticus Meyers, Rowan Winters, Ariella Nissly, Maria Grant, Lyra Zeller, Brooke Hempler, Georgia McLaren (Toys) 9. Fight Scene Rilynn Fortner (Clara) Aiden Hook (Fritz) Isabel Collier (Nutcracker) Chelsey Callahan (Mouse King) Avery Hook (Soldier General) Aiden Hook, Lincoln Nelson, Rose Mary Stump, Lyra Zeller, Atticus Meyers, Bellamy Meyers, Ariella Nissly (Soldiers) Anna Cate Daugherty (Mouse General) Tatum Kauerz, Maurie Simmons, Maura Lane Owen, Emory Parker, Ellora Hajner, Merin Dew (Mice) Diante Coker (Prince) 10. Land of the Snow Rani Higgins (Snow Queen) David Odenwelder (Snow King) Rilynn Fortner (Clara) Diante Coker (Prince) Josie Shuler, Laykin Dew, Rilynn Fortner, Chelsey Callahan, Anna Cate Daugherty, Avery Hook, Laurie Purvis, Cara Brand, Allie Purvis, Isabel Collier, Mia Ordway, June Polson, Ava Matthews, Maggie Newlin, Ella Kate Gamble (Snow Flakes) Georgia McLaren (Reindeer for sleigh)

Intermission (15 minutes)

Act Two =

Clara and the Nutcracker Prince continue their journey. When they arrive in the Kingdom of Sweets, the cooks have prepared delectable treats for their arrival. They are greeted by the Sugar Plum Fairy. In Clara's honor, the Sugar Plum Fairy ushers them up to the sugar mountain and arranges for the inhabitants of her kingdom to entertain them while they eat: hot chocolate, a Spanish Dance; tea, a Chinese Dance; coffee, an Arabian Dance; candy canes, a Russian Dance, and Clara enjoys the dance of the Danish Marzipan while she eats almond icing. Then taffy, tiny gumdrops & the French gingerbread cookies dance. To top off the evening she watches the Waltz of the Flowers, and finally the Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier dance a Grand Pas de Deux. As the celebration draws to a close, the sleigh returns to take her home and her dream ends...or was it a dream?

Land of the Sweets

Earld of the Sweets		
1. Greeting	Rani Higgins (Sugar Plum Fairy) John Mingle (Cavalier) Laykin Dew, Laurie Purvis (Soloists) Millie Parker, Maura Lane Owen, Rowan Winters, Marion Wildman, Ellora Hajner, Maria Grant, Brynn Castleberry, Brooke Hempler (Ribbon Candy) Rilynn Fortner (Clara) Diante Coker (Prince) Georgia McLaren (Reindeer)	
2. Spanish (Hot Chocolate)	Cara Brand <i>(Soloist)</i> Chelsey Callahan, Isabel Collier, Anna Cate Daugherty, Laykin Dew, Laurie Purvis, Josie Shuler	
3. Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy	Rani Higgins (Sugar Plum Fairy)	
4. Arabian (Coffee)	Allie Purvis and John Mingle (Soloists) Laykin Dew, Laurie Purvis, Josie Shuler, Chelsey Callahan	
5. Chinese (Tea)	Avery Hook <i>(Soloist)</i> Eden Polson, Ella Kate Gamble, Louise Hannah, Catherine Miller, Lilly Nelson, Maggie McPherson, Jane Newlin, Roxie Kate Comans, Mia Ordway	
6. Marzipan (Almond Icing)	Cara Brand and David Odenwelder <i>(Soloists)</i> Anna Cate Daugherty, Rilynn Fortner, Isabel Collier, Josie Shuler, Allie Purvis, Laykin Dew	
7. Dance of the Cavalier	John Mingle (Cavalier)	
8. Pollichinelles (Gingerbread Cookies)	Chelsey Callahan (Lady Ginger) Diante Coker (Gingerbread Man) June Polson, Catherine Miller, Mia Ordway, Roxie Kate Comans, Louise Hannah, Jane Newlin, Maggie McPherson,	

Lilly Nelson, Eden Polson, Ella Kate Gamble, Ava Matthews, Maggie Newlin (Ginger Snaps)

9. Taffy	Isabel Collier, David Odenwelder, Josie Shuler (Soloists) Ellora Hajner, Ariella Nissly, Maurie Simmons, Rose Mary Stump, Aiden Hook, Merin Dew, Atticus Meyers, Tatum Kauerz, Lincoln Nelson, Lyra Zeller, Emory Parker, Maura Lane Owen (Gumdrops)
10. Russian (Candy Canes)	Diante Coker <i>(Soloist)</i> Avery Hook, Ella Kate Gamble, Maggie Newlin, June Polson, Ava Matthews, Mia Ordway
11. Waltz of the Flowers	Justine Hook and David Odenwelder (Soloists) Rilynn Fortner, Cara Brand, Allie Purvis, Chelsey Callahan, Josie Shuler, Isabel Collier, Laurie Purvis, Laykin Dew, Anna Cate Daugherty
12. Grand Pas de Deux & Coda	Rani Higgins (Sugar Plum Fairy) John Mingle (Cavalier)
13. Finale	All Land of the Sweets Cast





Proud to be the official school of the Meridian Ballet Company

Teaching beginner through advanced for ages 3 - adult For more information visit us at: www.MeridianBallet.com or call 662-266-0500

Production Information -

1. Director and Choreographer Justine Ward-Hook 2. Staging for Pas de Deux Justine Hook and John Mingle 3. Restaged and re-choreographed after .. Marius Petitpa and The Royal Ballet versions 4. Lighting AD Bishop 5. Sound **David Bayles** 6. Video Kalob Adair 7. Photography Nikki Ordway Nikki Ordway 8. Ballet Seamstress Scott Hook and Jessica Gamble 9. Program

Thank You to Our Volunteers

We can't fully express our gratitude and appreciation for all of the parents and community volunteers who make this program a success. Without your willingness to work together as a team the ballet would not be possible. From the bottom of our heart, thank you for your tireless hard work and dedication.

The Nutcracker Guest Artists



John Mingle

John Mingle is a leading dancer with the Alabama Ballet in Birmingham. John trained on scholarship with the San Francisco Ballet School, Pacific Northwest Ballet School, American Ballet Theatre, Dallas Metropolitan Ballet, and Ballet Frontier of Texas. John earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Performance from Southern Methodist University where he danced the role of Waltz Man in George Balanchine's Serenade at the opening of the renowned Winspear Opera House. Prior to joining Alabama Ballet, he danced professionally with the Cincinnati Ballet and Dayton Ballet. Since joining Alabama Ballet, John has been seen in principal roles such as Basilio and Espada in Don Quixote, Romeo in Romeo and Juliet, Prince Désiré in The Sleeping Beauty, Cavalier in George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®, Von Rothbart in Swan Lake, Big Boss Man in Blue Suede Shoes, and Allegro in Western Symphony. John is thrilled to be working with Meridian Ballet on their second production of The Nutcracker. He has previously been a guest artist with New Albany Ballet and Meridain Ballet under Justine Hook where he performed Peter Pan, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, The Nutcracker, Once Upon a Time, and Cinderella.



David Odenwelder

David Odenwelder, originally from Haverhill, Massachusetts, began his training at The Dance Works and New England Civic Ballet. In 2011, David earned a B.F.A in Ballet Performance from the University of Cincinnati. He has performed and toured with Cincinnati Ballet and Neos Dance Theatre. This is David's 15th season with the Alabama Ballet. Some of his favorite roles have included the Roper in Agnes De Mille's Rodeo, Painted Black in Christopher Bruce's Rooster, Cavalier in George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®, Blue Bird in Sleeping Beauty, Gurn in La Sylphide and Bossa Nova in Blue Suede Shoes. He has also been seen in Twyla Tharp's In the Upper Room, Jiri Kylián's Sechs Tänze, Frederick Ashtons's Les Patineurs, George Balanchine's Allegro Brillante, and Micheal Fothergill's Chiaroscuro. David is excited to join Meridian Ballet as one of its distinguished guest artists.



Rani Higgins

Rani Higgins is originally from Guntown, Mississippi and continues to live and share her love of dance here in our state. She began her dance training at the age of 3, and transferred to study classical ballet with Justine Hook in New Albany at the age of 8. In 2011 Rani auditioned and became a member of the New Albany Ballet Company where she began dancing principal roles starting with Clara in the Nutcracker and adding many more valuable roles over the years such as: Titania in Mid Summer Night's Dream, Aurora in Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella in Cinderella, The Enchantress in Beauty and the Beast, The Caterpillar in Alice in Wonderland, Glinda in Wizard of Oz, and multiple solo and partnering roles in the Nutcracker over the years. This year she joins us as The Sugar Plum Fairy, Snow Queen, and Doll.

Rani has also studied with Joffrey Ballet during their summer programs and currently is running her own studio and dancewear shop in Saltillo, Dancing in the Rain.



The MERIDIAN BALLET encompasses the MERIDIAN SCHOOL OF BALLET and the MERIDIAN BALLET COMPANY.

About the Meridian School of Ballet

The Meridian School of Ballet provides beginner through advanced instruction to girls and boys ages 3 to adult. Previous students have been invited to dance in Joffrey Summer Intensive programs in New York, Miami and Chicago, the Mississippi School for the Arts in Jackson, Ballet Magnificat, and professionally for the Nashville Ballet. Students are afforded the opportunity to perform in Ballet Company productions.

At the Meridian School of Ballet we recognize classical ballet as a cornerstone of the performing arts that takes a lifetime to master. It is the foundation for modern dance, musical theater, gymnastics, synchronized swimming, figure skating, and more. Ballet is unquestionably an athletic art that requires both a teacher and a coach. So in addition to developing technique, grace and coordination, ballet teaches students how to overcome challenges, push physical limits, sharpen mental focus, build confidence, maintain physical fitness, and foster artistic creativity.

About the Meridian Ballet Company

The mission of the Meridian Ballet Company is to create a love of classical ballet and provide opportunities for Meridian School of Ballet students to perform regularly. It is a non-profit, youth oriented, pre-professional organization that performs full length ballets featuring guest artists, graduates of the school, and current students. Positions in Company productions are awarded through an audition process, and all students of the School are afforded an opportunity to dance in lead, supporting, or ensemble roles as determined by the director and guest artists.

Our guest artists travel from professional companies such as the Alabama Ballet, Indianapolis Ballet, and Nashville Ballet. The Company's strong relationships with professional dancers provide an avenue for our young dance force to perform at the highest level in full length pre-professional ballets.

Before moving to Meridian, the Ballet Company flourished as the New Albany Ballet Company from 2011 to 2022. Since its inception the company has staged full length performances of "The Nutcracker", "Cinderella", "Sleeping Beauty", "Wizard of Oz", "Mid Summer Night's Dream", "Alice in Winter Wonderland", "A Cinderella Christmas", "Peter Pan", "Beauty and the Beast", "Aladdin", and "Once Upon a Time". We are excited to create and produce new ballets in Meridian for years to come.

The Company operates independently from the Meridian School of Ballet, and relies solely upon the funding generosity of area businesses, performance tickets, boutique sales and small grants. Please consider supporting the company with a donation and receive an ad in our program.

Mailing address: Meridian Ballet 419 46th Ct. Meridian MS 39305

www.MeridianBallet.com

About Our Director =



Justine Ward Hook

Justine Ward Hook, a native of New Albany, serves as director of the company. She received her early ballet training with Sharon Long and danced with the Tupelo Ballet Company for 9 years where she also began her teaching career. She spent two sessions with Ballet Magnificat and performed with Ballet Mississippi. After participating in multiple full length ballets as a dancer, she discovered a passion for directing and staging ballets for the local community to foster a love for dance.

During her ballet career she has danced and studied extensively with professional companies and world renowned teachers such as, Anne Burton Avery (Atlanta Ballet), Linda Divin and Steven Mills (Ballet Austin), Finis Young (Joffrey Ballet), David Howard (Royal Ballet), Mia Michaels ("So You Think You Can Dance"), and Bob Rizzo. She continues to travel for conferences and workshops to bring new ideas back to her dancers, and instill in them a love of classical ballet and an appreciation for the arts.

Mrs. Hook has also coached flag, rifle, and majorette lines, and show choirs throughout north Mississippi. She has also choreographed multiple musicals and plays for schools and community theatre groups.

Justine is married to Scott, and they have 5 children: Kai, Layla, Jon, Avery, and Aiden.

"I'm so excited that you and your children have chosen to grow with us! It has been an extreme privilege to work with all of these students this performance season. We hope you enjoy "The Nutcracker" with all of our talented students and guest artists."

- Ms. Justine

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Ballet Company



Invited Company Guests



Diante Coker



Cara Brand

Company Members



Chelsey Callahan



Rilyn Fortner



Allie Purvis



Laurie Purvis



Isabel Collier



Josie Shuler



Laykin Dew



Anna Cate Daugherty



Avery Hook



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Anna Cate Daugherty



Best of luck to Anna Cate, & all of the Meridian Ballet dancers! We are proud of all your hard work & dedication!

Love, Mimi & Papaw

Commit your work to the Lord, & your plans will succeed - Proverbs 16:3

Maggie & Jane Trust in the lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6



🚄 Mississippi Power



Mississippi Power is proud to support The Meridian Ballet!

MUGSHOTS Grill & Bar

Mugshots Meridian is proud to support The Meridian Ballet! Congratulations to all of the dancers on a beautiful Nutcracker season!

Congratulations, Ella Kate! We are so proud of you!









The Meridian Ballet is proud to be the official school of The Meridian Ballet Company.

Love you Aiden, Avery, & Scott



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Congrats, Anna Cate!

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Congratulations, Ava!



Love -Mom, Dad, Jude, Emmy, & Annabelle





Mia we are so proud of you! We love watching you shine on stage. Love, Mom, Dad & Mason





We love our Meridian Ballet dancers!





Congrats to the sweetest Ribbon Candy! We love you, Maria!

Love -Mommy, Daddy, Morai, Grandpa, Meme, & Poppy



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Congrats to The Meridian Ballet Company!

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Best to yours, Gina Sharman



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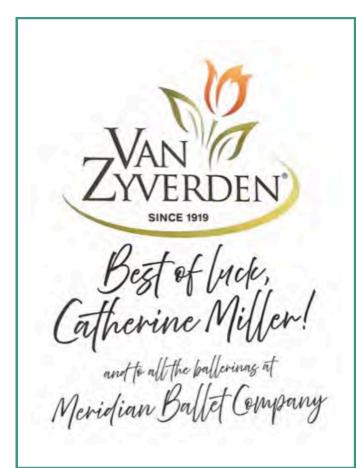


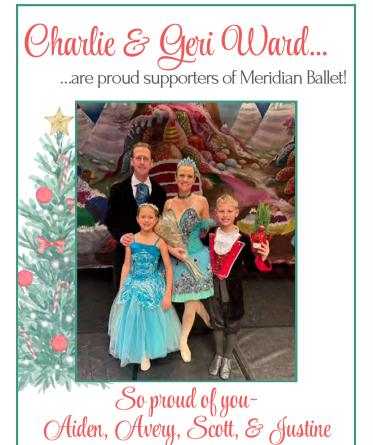
Good Luck, Josie!

Tsabel Collier



Mom & Dad are so proud of you. Congratulations on The Nutcracker!





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