

# Dancing royalty

By Bethan L. Jones  
Staff Writer

When Lexington High School senior Henocho Spinola, 17, was in sixth grade, his mother signed him up for ballet lessons.

Spinola said his mother justified the move as giving her son a further activity which would help him in playing football; ballet training is sometimes used to develop agility and strength in football players. Spinola's mother, local dancer Maria Tavares, had no idea the class would spark such an interest.

"I honestly don't even know what she expected," said Spinola.

Spinola admitted the first years were rough, with fellow students being less than un-

*'I'm definitely going to have butterflies in my stomach, but I've been ready since last year.'*

**Henocho Spinola**  
Dancer

derstanding about his outside activities. Spinola was dancing at Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre in Cambridge, training specifically in ballet.

"Outside of class ... was no fun," said Spinola.

In his fourth year, Spinola saw the American Ballet Theatre perform "Don Quixote," and was blown away by the talent of the lead male dancer.

"I wanted to be just like that," said Spinola.

Working hard over the next few years, Spinola upped his dance time from four hours to 16 hours a week as Mateo's studio. Tavares also registered her son for tap classes and capoeira, a Brazilian form which combines dance and martial arts.

Most would find any young man so dedicated to dance as dreamy, but Spinola has one more thing to add to his resume: He's a prince. This holiday season, Spinola is taking to the stage as the Nutcracker prince in the Jose Mateo production of the infamous ballet.

Sadly, the young dancer almost passed up the opportunity. While he was an understudy for the role last year, he was unsure whether he even wanted to audition for the ballet, fearing he would be cast a eleventh snowflake or wrapped gift number three. Jose Mateo himself spoke to Spinola and was able to coax him to audition and he landed the plum role.

"I really like it," said Spinola of the rehearsals and the preparation, adding there are days he takes off of school to



Staff photos by Ellen Bullock

**Henocho Spinola, 17, is a senior at Lexington High School and has the role of Nutcracker Prince in Jose Mateo's "The Nutcracker."**

dance. He said the years of training have been very helpful in remembering the numerous combinations required for the role.

"It's tough but I had to take it on," said the young dancer.

While he served as an understudy to the role last year, the school presently does not have anyone who can fill Spinola's shoes, meaning he will have to perform in every performance of the ballet and the show will be in trouble if Spinola has a bad day or catches the flu.

"I'm definitely going to have butterflies in my stomach," he said. "But I've been

ready since last year."

Fortunately, he will have support in his family and the LHS community who are coming out to see him.

As a LHS senior, Spinola is facing the tough choices of applying and choosing a college. He recently spent some time the University of Hartford where he took a few dance classes to see how the program ran, but he is still a little unsure whether he wants to take the leap and be a dance major.

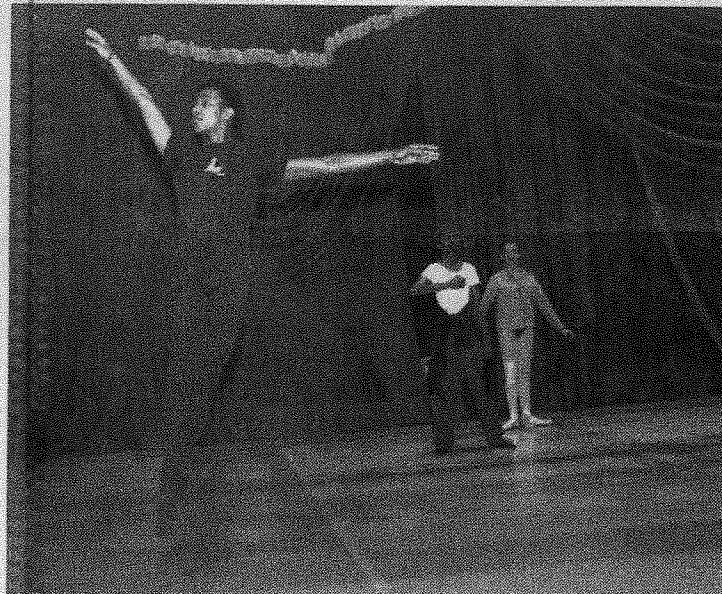
"I feel like I could do a lot better with medicine than dance but I would be a lot happier with dance," he said,

adding he has always enjoyed science in school and has an interest in a medical field.

Having time to make those tough choices, Spinola is focusing on preparing for "The Nutcracker," and helping his younger brother Eoin, 7, prepare to start taking dance lessons.

"When I put on my costume, I really feel like a prince," he said.

*The Jose Mateo production of the Nutcracker opens on Nov. 26 and runs until Dec. 18. For tickets and information, call 617-354-7467 or visit [www.ballettheatre.org](http://www.ballettheatre.org).*



**Spinola danced the Nutcracker Prince last year as an understudy.**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2005

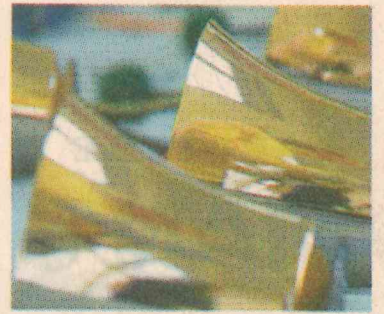
LEXINGTON MINUTEMAN

# arts!

LEXINGTON

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A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION  
OF ARTS NEWS & EVENTS  
AROUND LEXINGTON



**Bells with  
ringing**

The Hancock  
Bell Choirs  
busy this h  
season.

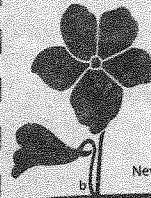
## *Romance with dance*





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## out and about



### it's that time of year

Two productions of *The Nutcracker* get underway this week. New York City Ballet Principal Dancer Damian Woetzel will appear as a guest artist in Boston Ballet's upcoming holiday production of *The Nutcracker*, which runs from Nov. 25-Dec. 30 at The Opera House. Woetzel, who trained at Boston Ballet School in the South End for eight years, will dance the role of the Nutcracker Prince on Thurs., Dec. 15 at 7:30 p.m. and Wed., Dec. 21 at 7:30 p.m. The annual tradition will be choreographed by Boston Ballet Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and will be performed by the entire Boston Ballet Company and more than 200 children. Tickets \$25-\$110.

Info: 617.695.6955 or [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre presents its 18th annual production of *The Nutcracker* through Dec. 18 at Sanctuary Theatre, 400 Harvard Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge. Tickets: \$15-\$35.

Info: 617.354.7467 or [www.ballettheatre.org](http://www.ballettheatre.org).

**Friday 11.25**

the Spider Woman. At the Roberts Studio Theater in the Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts.

## WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

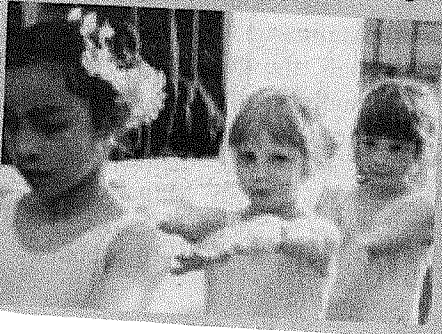
by Bruce Barrett

# Duxbury Nutcracker II

If ballet were reduced to a single word, the word would be "lift." Men defy gravity with their jumps. Women fly when lifted by their partners, float when they dance en pointe, and reach to heaven with every gesture. Add the brilliance of a favorite musical score, and everyone in the theater is lifted.

José Mateo's Ballet Theatre returns to lift Duxbury's Christmas spirits with four performances of *The Nutcracker* at the Performing Arts Center December 21st through December 24th. The Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday shows are at 6:00 pm, and the Christmas Eve show is at 2:00 pm. Call 617-354-7467 for tickets, or order on line at [www.ballettheatre.org](http://www.ballettheatre.org). Tickets for the Duxbury shows are starting to sell out, so hurry.

Duxbury's Liza Kostreva repeats her role as Clara, and with José's choreography, she dances en pointe. I saw her dance in Cambridge. The Ballet Theatre's home venue at the Sanctuary Theatre, near Harvard Square, raises 250 seats sharply from the stage. Every seat looks closely down onto the action, an intimate view of a family's Christmas Eve party complete with squabbling children, Drosselmeier's



magical dancing dolls, and Clara's budding dreams.

Liza's technique is more confident and graceful than ever, her pointe work clean and certain. This year I noticed another aspect of her dancing (and

José's choreography). Clara guides the timing and direction of some very young dancers – younger Party Children and some very adorable Mice. This interconnection between dancers, and emphasis on dance rather than mime to move the story forward sets José's vision apart from other companies.

"The children's dances are very difficult," José explained backstage. "They're not just posing. Not merely decoration."

Indeed, José explained, the ballet's original intent placed many young dancers on stage, charming the audience as well as giving unforgettable experience to young performers.

Overall, the Ballet Theatre's emphasis on dance over spectacle puts more dancers on stage, and draws more intensely from their talents. Featured dancers alternate through the evening in the spotlight and in the corps de ballet. Desirée Reese dances a stunning Sugar Plum Fairy, partnered by Cosmin Marculetiu. Cosmin dances with great power, but look for the delight he takes in the dancing of others. Watch the future for Madeline Bonn – she dances as if the music were born in her heart and flowed out through her finger-tips, her every movement in the music, down to the slightest finishing flourish.

One word for ballet: lift. One word for José Mateo's program: inclusive.

"Yes, I like that word," he agreed after the show.

Instead of cutting and slicing dancers to fit a mold, José develops casts and adjusts choreography to highlight strengths from the seasoned professionals to the tiniest Party Children, Mice, and Polichinelles. But he brushes aside praise for himself. His passion seems more for the program, and for its alternative approach that stresses dance, lively connection between dancers, and personal engagement with the audience.

"We've worked hard on that," he said, speaking of the extra lift demanded by the steeply graded Sanctuary Theatre. The result is a flow of expression, delight, and occasional intensity free from any pasted smiles or rote step-making. If last year's experience is any judge, they'll bring that lift right back to Duxbury.

Snow falls, the tree reaches up to the sky. Cherubs float on a cloud and in José Mateo's vision, everybody dances. Make the Duxbury Nutcracker shows a part of your Christmas tradition. You'll have visions of sugar plums you'll never forget, right here at home.



Each year, "The Nutcracker" is Boston Ballet's biggest production. And after being forced into the cramped Colonial Theatre last season, the company is getting ready to stretch out again tonight at the Opera House, where there's a bigger stage and orchestra pit and more seats. With this rebirth, what better time to look at "The Nutcracker" strictly by the numbers?

BY GEOFF EDGERS | GLOBE STAFF



ESSDRAS M SUAREZ/ GLOBE STAFF

## 'Twas the night before 'The Nutcracker,'

375 pairs of pointe shoes will be used in the run of "The Nutcracker."



and all through the Opera House \* not a creature was stirring, not even a king named

Mouse. \* His 30-inch tail is the longest in the show \* and here are more numbers

we thought you should know. \* With 330 hours of rehearsal, the company's ready. \* They'll use

375 pairs of pointe shoes, wash 288 loads of laundry. \* The Nutcracker's mask is heavy. It weighs

3 pounds \* and 3 dancers perform 6 roles each, strange as that sounds. \* The forecast says 2,000

pounds of paper snow will fall \* around a tree that's just 1 foot shorter than Fenway's left-field wall. \*

Now, Clara! Don't worry, no Rockettes will intrude this year. \* No need to send your muscle, that 10-foot-wide

Grandmere. \* After 37 years, the production will be a glorious sight. \* Our only fear? The celebrity cameos —

the thought of Robert Parker in tights! \* Yes, 52 percent of Boston Ballet's revenues come from this treat each year.

\* So parents, will you help them sell 4,756 nutcracker

souvenirs? \* And don't forget the main attraction, 130

dancers set to prance. \* Company members come from 15

countries, including Australia, Cuba, and France. \* So

all throughout the audience, we expect children will delight.

\* Happy "Nutcracker" to all, and to all a good night!

Boston Ballet's production of "The Nutcracker" runs tonight through Dec. 30 at the Opera House. 617-695-6955, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).



The M King's is 30 inches long.

The Christmas tree in "The Nutcracker" is 36 feet tall — 1 foot shorter than the Green Monster.



GLOBE STAFF FILE



ERIC ANTONIOU

The costumed Grand Ballab is 10 feet wide.

## More visions of sugar plums

Three other noteworthy "Nutcracker" productions take the classic for a spin.

### JOSE MATEO'S BALLET THEATRE, "THE NUTCRACKER"

Jose Mateo's "Nutcracker," now in its 18th season, is a prime example of less is more. Beautifully distilled and performed in the intimate Sanctuary Theatre, the production trades grand pageantry for a small-scale approach with high-quality dancing. Even young Clara's choreography features impressive pointe work, and the student dancers add much more than an amped-up cute factor. This year, Mateo adds new choreography, scenery, and costumes. Tonight — Dec. 18. 400 Harvard St., Cambridge. \$15- \$35. 617-354-7467, [www.ballettheatre.org](http://www.ballettheatre.org).

### BALLETROX, "URBAN NUTCRACKER"

This is the fifth year former Boston Ballet dancer Anthony Williams is presenting his sassy take on the favorite. Transplanting the fairy tale to a contemporary city apartment, Williams fuses ballet with tap, hip-hop, swing, and street dance, mixing Tchaikovsky's traditional score with Duke Ellington's infectious "Nutcracker" jazz suite. Guest artists include former Boston Ballet principal Adriana Suarez and Gianni DiMarco. Dec. 10, 11, 17, and 18. Strand Theatre, 543 Columbia Road, Dorchester. \$15- \$35. 617-635-1408, [www.balletrox.org](http://www.balletrox.org).

### ISLAND MOVING COMPANY, "A NEWPORT NUTCRACKER"

Newport's famed Rosecliff mansion hosts this popular production. Choreographers Miki Ohlsen, Eva Marie Pacheco, and Michael Bolger have set the party in the spectacular dining room. The mice and the soldiers unleash their fury in a battle on the famed sweetheart staircase. And the second act is in the gold and white ballroom, with cabaret-style seating. Nov. 17 — Dec. 2. Rosecliff, 548 Bellevue Ave., Newport, R.I. \$25- \$75. 401-621-6123, [www.arttixri.com](http://www.arttixri.com).

— KAREN CAMPBELL

# Cantabrigians

## Young dancers light up the 'Nutcracker' stage

By Theodore Bale  
CORRESPONDENT

Every January they start calling Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre in Harvard Square, hoping for a part in "The Nutcracker" the following December. More than 200 end up as mice, soldiers, angels and party guests. They are children, and the beloved holiday ballet would make little impact without them.

Three individual casts in this year's production include 23 children who live in Cambridge. Others come from Mateo's satellite schools located in Duxbury, Falmouth and Hingham, or schools such as Charles River Ballet. Many of Mateo's former company members run their own schools now, and they send students to his auditions as well.

"We have been trying to reach out and bring in diverse communities," said Scott Fraser, managing director of the company. "About 80 percent of the kids also take class here. We have some kids who are 18 now, and they've been in our 'Nutcracker' since they were 6. This is one way that an arts organization can build community."

Fraser explained that auditions usually happen around Columbus Day, beginning at 9 a.m. with the youngest children. "We probably get 100 or so in that age group, and usually they're terrified," he said. "But we really try to make ballet accessible and demystified for them, in a good way. We want this to be as warm and friendly an environment as possible, but still a little formal. The kids are working with artists in the studio, people like Alice Hunter and Jose Mateo, and that's a matter of learning to establish respect and not a distancing thing."

Nine-year-old Joshua Nolan, a Cambridge resident and student at the Amigos School, first saw Mateo's "Nutcracker" when he was 5. Fraser said he is one of many previous audience members who dance now in the production.

"I was also a Party Boy last year, but in a different part," said Nolan just before getting ready for his Saturday matinee performance. He appears in



Lillian Blanchard, 8, of Cambridge looks angelic in her role as Polchinnelle in "The Nutcracker." She is one of 23 Cambridge kids to perform in this year's s

two different casts and had an evening show that night as well. "In one cast, I get a coin pulled out of my ear by Mr. Mateo. In both casts, I get to walk backwards with the Nutcracker behind me. That's pretty much my only special part. I liked last year better," he said with a sigh, "because I got to run around in a circle, and I got to try and jump for the Nutcracker."

He reveals the secret about the coin trick, but then thinks twice and says, "but don't tell anyone that!"

Georgia McKee, 10, of Cambridge

started off as a mouse four years ago and has been a Polchinnelle in the second act for the past three years.

"The hardest thing is remembering every step," she said. "Rehearsals are easy because you can do it over and over. But I always get nervous right before I go on, and I think I'm going to forget everything."

If she could dance any role in the ballet, she'd like to be Clara. "That's because I like being on stage," said McKee with confidence, "and she gets to be on stage a lot of the time."

What does she think of Mateo's other ballets? "They're pretty good!"

Oscar Burucca, a fourth-grader at the Amigos School, admitted that he found the audition a little scary. It was the first time he'd ever been in a ballet studio.

"I knew nothing about ballet at that time," said Burucca, "and it was pretty difficult trying to learn the moves for the first time. I got stuck on this part where you have to hop. I always confused which leg was right and which was left. It took about two or three weeks before I felt like I really knew the part."

He added that he thought Mateo was a very funny man, and that putting on stage makeup is the biggest challenge. "I get scared when they put the eyeliner on," he said, "because it feels like the pencil is going to touch your eyeball."

He described festivities at his aunt's

house in Malden, where his entire family gathers every Christmas. "All the presents are there," he said. "My cousin lives downstairs and my aunt lives upstairs, so mostly we do the presents upstairs and dancing downstairs. It's a lot like the ballet, except a magician doesn't come."

All three children said they liked being around Mateo. "It's really amazing," said Fraser, "because he never has the expectation of them as kids. To him, they are little artists. He reminds them about always being present and staying focused."

In addition to learning the rudiments of dance, the children also gain experience with the unexpected.

"A lot of funny things happened this year, and a lot of funny things hap-

pened last year," said Nolan. "Oscar and I were running over the girls, some of the girls, some of the boys. Clara in the head and feet one time, this girl's dress came down, and she had to keep up! And, I dropped my tutu when we were supposed to be dancing."

How will Nolan spend the time between the matinee and the performance? "Oscar and I are going to have a play date at my house."

Performances at The Ballet Theatre in Harvard Square on Dec. 18 and continue at the Performing Arts Center on Dec. 24. Tickets: \$15-\$35; call 7467 or order online at [letTheatre.org](http://letTheatre.org).



Amy Chan, 6, of Cambridge leads the pack of mice in Saturday's show.

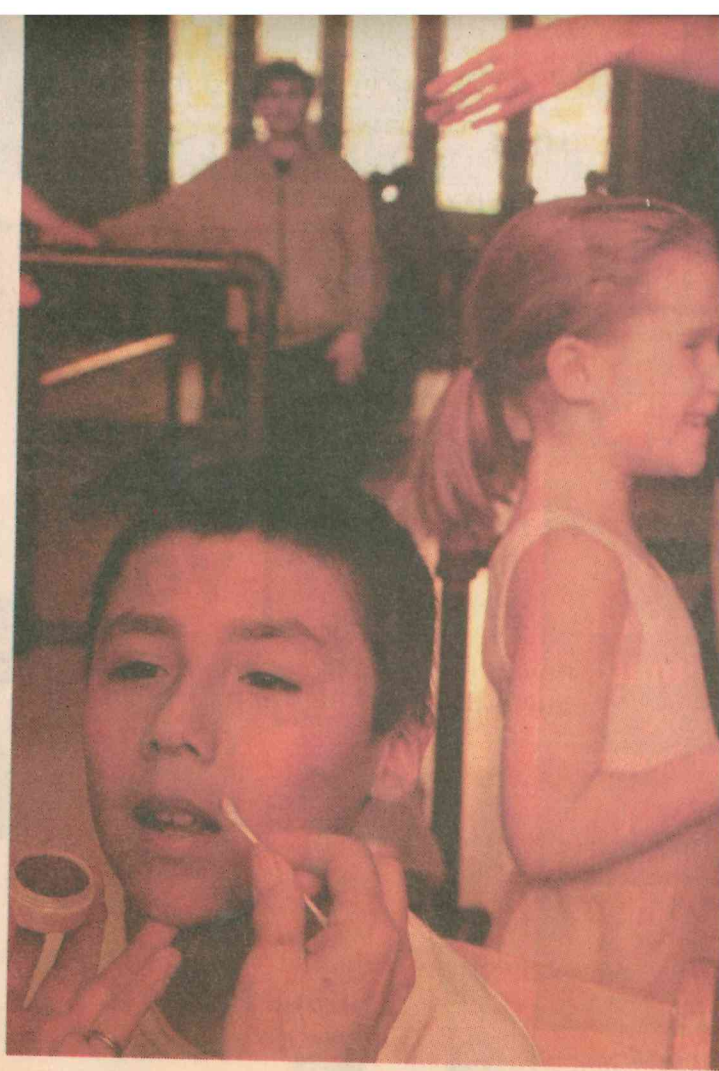


Amy Chan, 6, center, of Cambridge leads the pack of mice in Saturday's show.

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Cambridge residents Oscar Burucca, center, and Joshua Nolan, right, are part of the company of players in this year's production of the annual Christmas classic.



Oscar Burucca, 9, of Cambridge sits for his makeup before Saturday's matinee of "The Nutcracker."

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QUICK PICKS

By Meredith Goldstein

**Online**

Mayor Thomas M. Menino wants to promote arts tourism, so he's offering special deals on some of the best tickets in town. The website [www.mayorsholidayspecial.com](http://www.mayorsholidayspecial.com) is packed with specials on tickets for shows such as Irving Berlin's "White Christmas," "Black Nativity," and the Boston Ballet's "The Nutcracker." There's even information about parking deals. The site also features gift certificate information for ArtsBoston, a nonprofit arts organization.

**Shopping**

**Filene's** in Downtown Crossing is making this Black Friday a bit brighter. The store kicks off the holiday season today with multiple activities. At noon, Filene's unveils its holiday window display. From 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., you can meet Santa Claus on the fifth floor. Starting at 5 p.m., there will be a tree-lightening celebration with bell chiming on the corner of Washington and Summer streets, a free outdoor performance by the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Tanglewood Festival Chorus, excerpts from Irving Berlin's "White Christmas," and Boston Ballet dancers performing from "The Nutcracker." **Filene's**, 426 Washington St., 1-800-438-3682. [www.filenes.com](http://www.filenes.com)

**Theater**

Hyde Park's **Riverside Theatre Works** offers two shows for the price of one. Starting today, the stage company opens two productions. The first is the Dickens classic "**A Christmas Carol**." The show is followed by a performance of "**Amahl**



**DANCE**

'Nutcracker' on a small scale

José Mateo's Ballet Theatre opens its unique production of "**The Nutcracker**" tonight. The Harvard Square-based dance company performs the Christmas classic every year. It doesn't have the budget of the Boston Ballet's Nutcracker spectacular, but the Mateo professional dancers can boast a more intimate take on the production for audiences. Mateo himself performs as the man who gives Clara the nutcracker. The show runs through Dec. 24, first in Cambridge, then in Duxbury. Seats are going fast. Tickets: \$15-\$50. **The Sanctuary Theatre**, 400 Harvard St., Cambridge, 617-354-7467. [www.ballettheatre.org](http://www.ballettheatre.org)

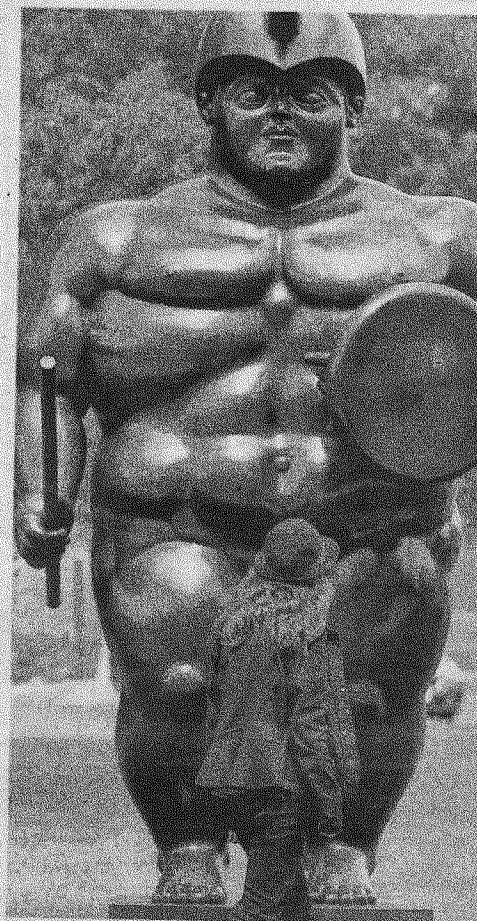
**and the Night Visitors**," a play about a boy, three kings, and an unusual star. Both family-friendly productions will be performed Fridays to Sundays through Dec. 18. Tonight's show is at 8. Tickets: \$19, \$22. **Riverside Theatre Works**, 45 Fairmont Ave., Hyde Park, 617-361-7024. [www.rtwboston.org](http://www.rtwboston.org)



**Music**

Sure, many bands have guitarists and bassists, but how many can say they feature a glockenspiel player? Tonight, the **Pandas**, a Worcester-based band (left) that models itself after Stereolab and Tortoise, plays a show at the Zeitgeist Gallery. Promoters at the

**HEADS UP**



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

It's not too late to find out what businessman William I. Koch loves. The Museum of Fine Arts has extended "**Things I Love: The Many Collections of William I. Koch**" through Sunday. The exhibit features Koch's favorite items from his private collection. There are European and American masterpieces, artifacts, and, of course, the two boats from the America's Cup race on the museum's front lawn. The MFA's weekend hours are 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Tickets: \$15, \$6.50 for children. **Museum of Fine Arts**, 465 Huntington Ave., 617-267-9300. [www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org)

Inman Square venue say the concert will showcase the band's lo-fi samples, video projections, and the small xylophone-like instrument. The band plays at 9:30. Tickets: \$12. **Zeitgeist Gallery**, 1353 Cambridge St., Cambridge, 617-876-6060. [www.zeitgeistgallery.org](http://www.zeitgeistgallery.org)

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## THURS 12:22

**JOSE MATEO'S BALLET THEATRE "THE NUTCRACKER"** Duxbury Performing Arts Center, 73 Alden St., Duxbury. 617-354-7467. 6 p.m. Repeats Fri at 6 p.m., Sat at 2 p.m. \$19-\$50.

If you missed it during its recent run in Cambridge, you still have a couple more chances to catch Jose Mateo's charming, small-scale version of "The Nutcracker" by skipping down to Duxbury's gorgeous new Performing Arts Center. Mateo's "Nutcracker" favors a sweetly touching directness and intimacy, as well as substantive dancing throughout the ranks — even Clara's on pointe, and the large contingent of children are there for more than just the cute factor. Now in its 18th season, the production features some new choreographic details, with a nicely streamlined Act I and lively dancing by the principals in the Act II variations.

KAREN CAMPBELL

**French Library and Cultural Center** 53 Marlborough St., Boston. 617-912-0400. [www.frenchlib.org](http://www.frenchlib.org) Mon-Tues 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Thurs 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Wed 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Fri-Sat 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Through 1/2: Photographer David Lewalski.

**Gleason Public Library** 22 Bedford Road, Carlisle. 978-369-4898. [www.gleasonlibrary.org](http://www.gleasonlibrary.org) Mon-Tues 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Thurs 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Wed 1-9 p.m., Fri-Sat 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Through 12/31: Catherine Evans, Dianne Pappas.

**Goodnow Library** 21 Concord Road, Sudbury. 978-443-1035, ext. 2. Mon-Wed 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Thurs-Sat 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun 2-5 p.m. Through 12/31: Patti Kelly.

**Hingham Public Library** **Dolphin Gallery** Rte. 228, Hingham. 781-837-8091. Mon-Thurs 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Sat 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun 1-5 p.m. Through 2/2: Cindy Vallino.

**Clemens Gallery** 66 Leavitt St., Hingham. 781-741-1405. Mon-Thurs 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Sat 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun 1-5 p.m. Through 1/5: JoAnne Chittick.

**Newton Free Library** 330 Homer St., Newton. 617-796-1360. [www.ci.newton.ma.us](http://www.ci.newton.ma.us) Mon-Thurs 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun noon-5 p.m. **Gallery** Through 12/29: "Starting

with Trees: Oil Paintings Bordering on the Abstract" Susan Post Lichtenstein.

**Main Hall** Through 12/29: "Colored Shadows" Shelby Tiziani.

**Somerville Public Library** 79 Highland Ave., Somerville. 617-623-5000. Mon-Thurs 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Through 12/30: Community mapping project.

**Ventress Library Gallery** Webster Street, Marshfield. 781-837-8091. Mon-Wed 9:30 a.m.-9 p.m., Thurs-Sun 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Through 1/13: Dominic Farrell.

### SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

**Addison Gallery of American Art** Phillips Academy, Rte. 28 and Chapel Avenue, Andover. 978-749-4015. Tues-Sat 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun 1-5 p.m. Models of American Sailing Ships. Through 12/31: Oscar Palacio.

**Babson College** Forest Street, Wellesley. 781-239-5888. Mon-Fri 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Through 12/22: Cumulative art installation by Hannah Burr.

**Boston University** **BU Art Gallery** 855 Commonwealth Ave., Boston. 617-353-3329. Tues-Fri 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat-Sun 1-5 p.m. Through 1/22: "Syncopated Rhythms, 20th-Century African

American Art From the George and Joyce Wein Collection."

**Mugar Library** Gottlieb Center 771 Commonwealth Ave., Boston. 617-353-1309. Through 9/30: "Espionage: Intelligence, Secrets and Spies."

**Carpenter Center for Visual Arts** at Harvard University, 24 Quincy St., Cambridge. 617-495-3251. Mon-Sat 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun 1-5 p.m. Through 4/16: Sol LeWitt, Yayoi Kusama, Cai Guo-Qiang. Through 1/5: Sarah Bedford, Ann Craven, Brady Dollarhide, others.

**College of the Holy Cross** Cantor Art Gallery, 1 College St., 1st floor of O'Kane Hall, Worcester. 508-793-3356. Mon-Fri 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat 2-5 p.m. Through 1/25: "The Art of Ebru: Turkish Paper Marbling With Islamic Calligraphy" Feridun Oygoren, Guliz Pamukoglu.

**Endicott College** Art Center, 376 Hale St., Beverly. 978-232-2250. Mon-Fri 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Through 12/22: Endicott X-Tra: Beyond the Classroom.



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# Mateo's company offers polished, intimate 'Nutcracker'

By Karen Campbell  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

CAMBRIDGE — For 18 years, Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre has offered local audiences a polished, small-scale version of "The Nutcracker" that favors substantive dancing and a sweet, touching directness.

## Dance Review

Mateo's 20-year-old troupe, the second-largest ballet company in Boston, makes no attempt to compete with Boston Ballet's opulence and visual spectacle. The charm of this spare but beautifully costumed production is in the intimacy and details most patrons would miss in a grander, more spacious setting. The remodeled church space of the Sanctuary Theatre in Cambridge fits this production just right.

Mateo takes liberties with the usually slow-moving traditional scenario of the opening act; he gets things moving immediately and sets the tone for vivid, well-paced storytelling. The only hitch is the prologue music, which plays to a closed curtain and could easily do without the repeat. But instead of opening the action on a meandering street scene, the ballet opens on young Clara's dream world, where dancing fairies create a Christmas tree out of streamers falling from the ceiling and deliver a mysterious gift. Soon after, we meet the magical Dr. Drosselmeyer, whom the ever-youthful Mateo portrays with debonair benevolence tinged with the slightest air of melancholy, rounding up his renegade dolls before heading off to the Silberhaus Christmas party.

## The Nutcracker

Performed by Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre  
At: The Sanctuary Theatre, Cambridge,  
Thursday night (continues through Dec. 18).  
617-354-7467, [www.ballettheatre.org](http://www.ballettheatre.org)

The rest of the first act flies by, from the charming Columbine and Harlequin duet, given a delightful performance by Desiree Parrott and Cosmin Marculetiu on opening night, to the group dances by both adults and children. The baby mice were predictably adorable, the soldiers spit and polish, and the older group of student Angels in Act II especially impressive in challenging pointe work. Clara, radiantly portrayed with poise and expressivity by young Jaclyn Sanford, was given technically demanding pointe work from the opening tableau.

The only slow point of the night follows Clara's quick dispatch of the Mouse King, which frees her toy Nutcracker from a magic spell. Sanford and Henoch Spinola, a capable but rather wimpy Nutcracker Prince, have little to do while waiting for the snow to start. But once it does, Mateo's swirling patterns of dancers are visually captivating. The addition of men to the corps allows for partnered lifts to create a breathtaking multilayered effect.

Act II's divertissements were solid, especially Charissa Leatherman and Sean Gunter in a vivaciously flamboyant "Trepak" and Susan Bourque and David Dubois in a restrained yet sensuous "Coffee." Though



GARY SLOAN

Desiree Parrott and Cosmin Marculetiu performed the Columbine and Harlequin duet in a spare but beautifully costumed production.

the "Waltz of the Flowers" was overly busy, never really settling into the swing of Tchaikovsky's sumptuous music, Sybil Watkins floated through the dance with ethereal, long-lined elegance as the Dew Drop Fairy. The most spectacular dancing of the evening came with the return of Parrott and

Marculetiu as the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier. Marculetiu is missing some height and extension at this stage of his career, but his partnering was impeccable. Parrott was superb, with crystalline articulation and liquid, expressive arms. Her stage-circling round of pirouettes was spot on.

## Middleboro youth to perform in Ballet Theatre's 'The Nutcracker'

CAMBRIDGE — A resident of Middleboro, Tyler Philie is performing in José Mateo's Ballet Theatre's "The Nutcracker," choreographed by Artistic Director José Mateo in the role of a party boy. Tyler is a student at the Rachel Park Dance Center and joins the professional cast in the holiday favorite with performances at José Mateo's Ballet Theatre's Sanctuary Theatre in Harvard Square, Cambridge, Nov. 25-Dec. 18 and the new Duxbury Performing Arts Center in Duxbury, Dec. 21-24.

Choreographed by Artistic Director José Mateo, Ballet Theatre's original production of "The Nutcracker" has become a holiday tradition for New England audiences over the past 17 years. Ballet Theatre's Nutcracker distinguishes itself from all others by its focus on the dancing rather than the usual mime and theatrics associated with other productions. This is especially true of the 200 children, ages 6-18 from throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire who join the professional cast as Party Children, Mice, Soldiers, Polichinelles, Cherubs, Attendants, Angels and the lead child role of Clara.

Experience the magic of Bal-



**Tyler Philie**

of this beloved holiday classic. Sumptuous sets and costumes and spectacular dancing bring Clara's dream world to life. Dancing snowflakes, battling toy soldiers and waltzing Sugar Plum Fairies make this affordable Nutcracker a delight for children of all ages. Call (617) 354-7467 or visit [www.BalletTheatre.org](http://www.BalletTheatre.org) to order tickets for both venues.

## Good things come in small package at 'Nutcracker'

By HEATHER V. ENG

Not just anyone can take on Boston Ballet. But on Thursday, Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre proved up to "The Nutcracker" challenge.

Mateo's version lacks a lavish stage

*Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre in "The Nutcracker," at the Sanctuary Theatre, Cambridge, Thursday. Through Dec. 18.*

set and live orchestra, but his crisp, clean choreography more than com-

### DANCE REVIEW

pensates, and Cambridge's intimate Sanctuary Theatre proves an ideal venue. There's no squinting from the balcony at this "Nutcracker."

Mateo has cultivated a company of dancers with beautiful, effortless extensions. Jaelyn Sanford, 15, stunningly danced the role of Clara on pointe. Her performance exuded confidence and ease, and she ex-

hibited a front extension line that would be the envy of dancers twice her age.

But not all company members boasted as solid a performance. Temple Carroll danced the Snow Queen with flawless arabesques, but her jumps often fell flat. And Cosmin Marculetiu seemed ill-at-ease as Harlequin. But as the Cavalier, he and Desiree Parrott, the Sugar Plum Fairy, gave the performance of the evening with their pas de deux.

## arts!

# A lifetime of pirouettes

By Bethan L. Jones

Staff Writer

Shannon Woods has the look of a ballerina.

Tall and thin with wire rimmed glasses perched on her nose, her movements and posture betray the years of classical training. And it has been years.

Shannon, now 12, was placed in her first dance class when she was 3. The Woods family was then residing in upstate New York and the blossoming dancer was enrolled in classes at the New York Conservatory of the Arts, a comprehensive instruction program in dance, music and theater.

In 1997, the Woods family moved from New York to Lexington and Shannon started taking ballet, jazz and tap classes at the Dance Inn at the Munroe Center for the Arts.

"Jazz and ballet were always my favorite," said Shannon.

At the Dance Inn, Shannon took classes in several dance disciplines including a technique class where she learned about formal ballet techniques to improve her dancing. As part of the school curriculum is an emphasis on performance, Shannon had the opportunity to perform at the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade in Boston and in other venues.

This past spring, Shannon made the tough choice of leaving the Dance Inn and moving one floor upstairs in the Munroe building to the Lexington School of Ballet so she could focus more on ballet. Part of the move was prompted by Shannon's involvement with the Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre, a dance school in Cambridge. One of Shannon's instructors encouraged her to take part in Mateo's young dancer's program, which the young dancer took to immediately. Going into the fall, Shannon was taking ballet and pointe classes at the Lexington School and spending her Saturdays in Cambridge taking ballet and



Staff photos by Ellen Bullock

Shannon Woods, 12, a Lexington resident, is performing the role of a soldier in Jose Mateo's "The Nutcracker."

technique.

This fall also opened another opportunity for Shannon; a chance to perform in "The Nutcracker."

"She's always wanted to dance in 'The Nutcracker,'" said Cindy Woods, Shannon's mother.

Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" is the perennial holiday ballet about a young girl and her magical new toy from her mysterious uncle. With beautiful music, gorgeous costumes and a whole host of dancers from children to prima ballerinas, the performance is often a benchmark in young imaginations and careers.

Cindy Woods had taken Shannon to see the ballet on several occasions and the blossoming ballerina was enthralled. Knowing Jose Mateo puts on an annual performance of the ballet, Shannon prepared for the audition and landed a part of a toy soldier who support the Nutcracker in his battle against the Rat King and his minions.

While the dancers are all students at the school, auditions were held in a professional manner. Photos were taken of the dancers who then performed small combinations across the floor while being evaluated by the judges.

"I just thought of it as a regular class," said Shannon. "I was just happy I got a part in 'The Nutcracker.'"

Since rehearsals began back in the fall, Shannon's Saturdays have become even more hectic. In the morning she still attends her regular dance classes. She then returns to Lexington for lunch and a short break and then goes back to Jose Mateo's for Nutcracker rehearsals for at least two hours.

"She's doing an amazing job balancing," said Cindy Woods, adding Shannon still makes time for her homework and to see her friends. Shannon is also a flute player and is in the orchestra at Clarke Middle School and intends to audition for Junior District Orchestra this year and wants to play lacrosse in the spring.

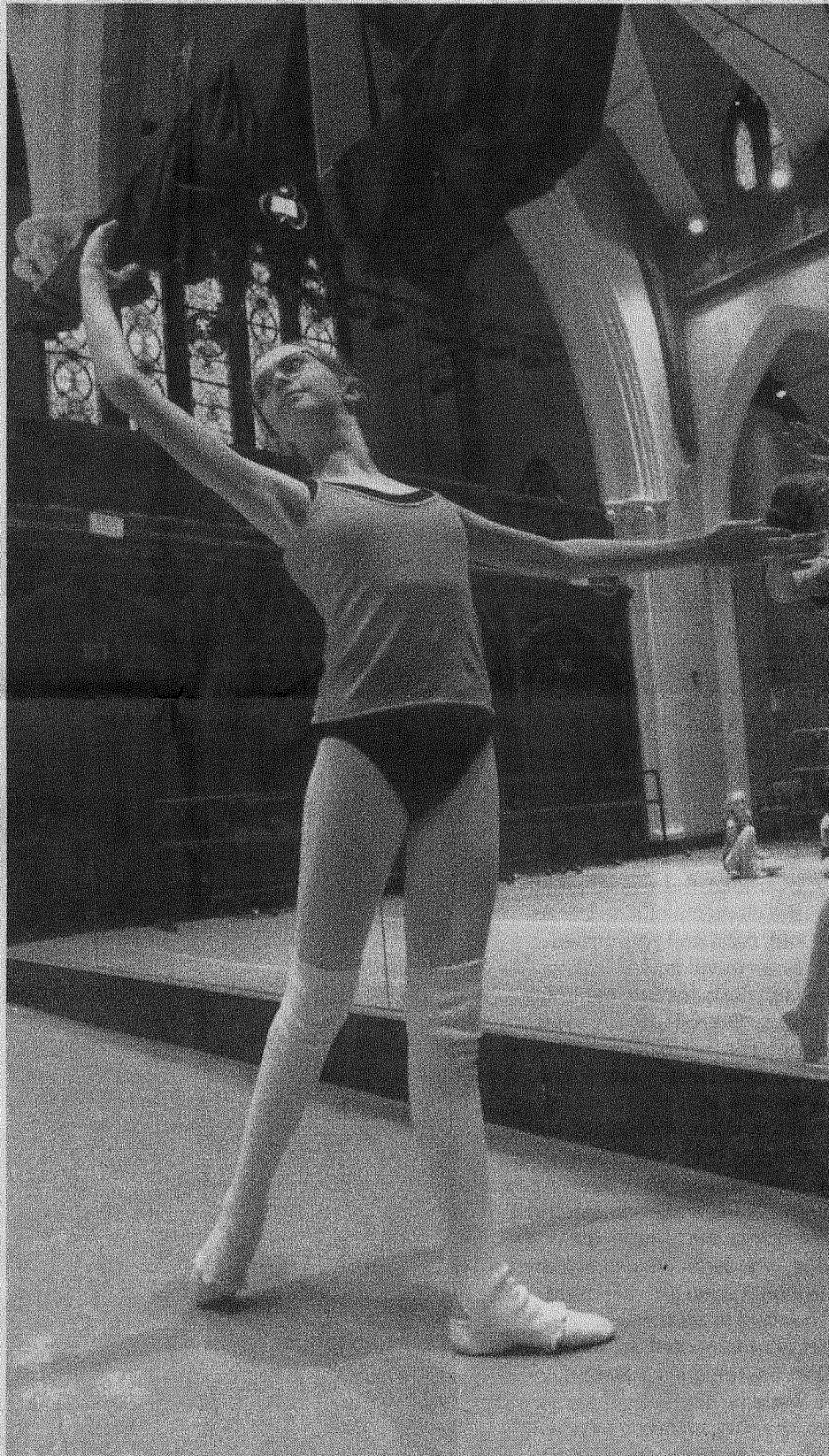
Right now, however, Shannon's world is focused on dance. Her first performance is scheduled for Nov. 26 and she was very excited. In the sequence, Shannon and the other soldiers battle with the rats, played by the youngest dancers, aged 5.

When asked if she wants to be a professional dancer, Shannon has no problems hiding her enthusiasm.

"Definitely," said Shannon, adding she wants to move to New York City when she gets old enough.

This spring, the Lexington School of Ballet will be putting on "Coppelia" and Shannon is eager to participate.

"I want to be in it," she



Woods, who practices every day for her role in "The Nutcracker," has been since she was 3.

said. "I'm used to performing."

Her comfort on the stage is attributed to the performance emphasis of the Dance Inn, said Woods, adding the programs there were "key to building [Shannon's] interest in dance."

For the holiday's, Cindy

Woods, husband John and younger sister Cailyn, 9, will be going to see "The Nutcracker," many, many times.

"Of course we'll be there ... are you kidding me," said Cindy, laughing. "I'm behind her ... whatever she wants to do."

Shannon Woods can be

seen in the Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre of "The Nutcracker" on Saturday, Nov. 26, 7 p.m. Her last performance is on Sunday, Nov. 27, 7 p.m. For further information, contact Jose Mateo at studio 617-354-1111 or visit [www.ball.com](http://www.ball.com)