# TIPS TO HELP CHILDREN GET THE MOST OUT OF THEIR FIRST NUTCRACKER EXPERIENCE WITH BALLLET VICTORIA



- · Get to know the story ahead of time
- Explain that the Nutcracker is a story without words, told entirely by the beautiful movements of dancers in a language called ballet.

### **ACT I**

As per their annual tradition, Clara's family is welcoming guests to their unique Christmas Eve party. Family and friends are in attendance to enjoy the festivities, with dancing and decorating the Christmas tree. As usual, Uncle Dross has brought a trunk filled with toys from his exotic travels, and this year, he offers Clara a very special Nutcracker.

As the evening draws to an end, and everyone has retired for the night, Clara remains in the living room to play with the Nutcracker and introduce him to her dolls. However, when the clock strikes midnight, the Rat King and his rats enters and creates complete chaos, terrifying Clara and her dolls. Just in time, her Uncle Dross arrives and summons the Nutcracker for help. Clara bravely faces her fear and eventually stops the fight between the Nutcracker and the Rat King before anyone gets hurt. To reward her courage, Uncle Dross invites the Snow Queen and her snowflakes to dance for Clara.

### **Intermission**

## **ACT II**

The Snow Queen calls upon her white dragon and sends Clara on a journey around the world. Clara is both nervous and excited by the unknown but gratefully dances with all the fabulous characters she meets. Eventually, the Dewdrop Fairy appears, bringing Clara a magical tiara that turns her into the Sugarplum Fairy. The Nutcracker Prince and Clara dance the grand pas de deux together for everyone to enjoy.

Clara, asleep on the couch holding her Nutcracker doll, is awoken by her mom who takes her back to bed. Christmas night is quiet again as they all dream about special gifts and the magical times shared with family and friends.

### The End

# Things to help build anticipation before show starts

Letting your child know a few things to look for or listen for in the performance can help them feel an excited sense of anticipation, and keep them engaged throughout the performance.

Before the show, ask them to watch for the following:

- At the Christmas Party, the children are playing games around the Christmas tree; what game will they be playing?
- Candy canes Uncle Dross will do a trick with Candy canes with Clara. Watch for this magic trick.
- There will be a fantastical baby animal in the production- what kind of animal?
- There is a Snow Queen in the production what is her name?
- There is a dance called Waltz of the Flowers in the show how many 'flowers/dancers' can you count on stage?
- For older children: The backdrops during Clara's journey feature scenery of famous places in the world. How many can you guess/count? (Great Wall of China, The St. Basils Cathedral in Moscow, Russia, the Rialto Bridge in Venice, Italy, and a winter forest scene shot in Revelstoke!)

### Listen to the Music ahead of time

The Music of the Nutcracker was written by Pyotrllyich Tchaikovsky in 1892, and has become some of the most recognized music in the world. Many of the musical numbers in the ballet are associated with specific characters and objects. Your child will delight in 'meeting' these characters on the stage if they recognize the music.

### Play some of these tunes at bedtime or listen to together as a family before the show:

- Dance of the Snowflakes
- The Russian Dance
- The Arabian Dance
- The Chinese Dance
- · Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
- Waltz of the Flowers

### After the performance, ask your child:

- What was your favorite character in the story and why?
- How did the ballet make you feel? Did you have different feelings at different parts of the ballet?
- Was there any part of the ballet that you did not like? Why?
- If you could imagine another story told with our words as a ballet, what story would you like to see 'danced'?

