



# AMERICA'S FIRST NUTCRACKER — A UTAH STORY

## An American Story: Willam Christensen

Fondly remembered as the “grandfather of American ballet,” the late Willam Christensen was born and raised in Brigham City, Utah. A true pioneer in dance, Christensen (“Mr. C”) established the San Francisco Ballet, the oldest professional ballet company in the U.S., in 1938. He then returned to Salt Lake City, Utah, founding both the ballet department at the University of Utah in 1951, the first of its kind, and Ballet West in 1963. Mr. C staged the very first full-length production of the now-beloved *The Nutcracker* on Christmas Eve in 1944, at the San Francisco Ballet. This historical production sparked a long-lasting cultural phenomenon that continues today.

Ballet West carries on Mr. C’s legacy with its annual presentation of his *Nutcracker*, now the longest-running production of the ballet in the U.S.

## The Nutcracker: A Cultural Phenomenon

*The Nutcracker* has transcended generations to become a holiday tradition for millions of Americans each year, in countless cities and towns across the country. While *The Nutcracker* has become a household name in ballet in the 75 years since Mr. C’s premiere, the story of its introduction in the U.S., and of Mr. C’s role in sparking its phenomenon, is largely overlooked.

“One of the best  
productions I’ve  
ever seen”

—Alastair Macaulay,  
*The New York Times*

## 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of America’s Nutcracker

To celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of company founder Willam Christensen’s *The Nutcracker*, Ballet West, in collaboration with BYUtv, will produce a documentary program chronicling the history of the first *Nutcracker* in America, highlighting the role of Mr. C in this incredible story with roots in Utah.



ARTISTS OF BALLET WEST. PHOTOS ON THIS SIDE BY BEAU PEARSON

### NUTCRACKER BY THE NUMBERS

Ballet West sells **30,000 Nutcracker tickets** each year. Nationwide, **millions** of *Nutcracker* tickets are sold annually.

Over the last five years, Ballet West has welcomed *Nutcracker* patrons from **all 50 U.S. states and 4 U.S. districts & territories**, as well as **16 countries**.

Each year, Ballet West’s *The Nutcracker* features **275 children**. Annually, **more than 100,000 children** perform in productions of *The Nutcracker* across the U.S.

Utah now has the historic opportunity to celebrate the legacy of Mr. C’s *The Nutcracker*, the first full-length production of the ballet to grace American stages and which celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.



ARTISTS OF BALLET WEST. TOP PHOTO BY LUKE ISLEY. BOTTOM PHOTOS BY BEAU PEARSON

# 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of America's First *Nutcracker*

By producing and broadcasting a documentary program focused on its historic *Nutcracker* production, Ballet West will highlight a compelling, yet neglected, story; one that recounts how the ballet became the holiday phenomenon that it is today, celebrated by millions annually. Most Americans are familiar with the story of *The Nutcracker* itself, but few know the story, with roots in Utah, of how it first came to be in this country.

## Documentary Program, in collaboration with BYUtV

**BYUtV** will film Ballet West's *The Nutcracker* at the Janet Quinney Lawson Capitol Theatre and will produce a documentary program to debut in the fall of 2019. The program will include performance footage of Ballet West's *The Nutcracker* as well as a historical narrative highlighting Mr. C's influence on the legacy of the production. Interspersed with interviews from ballet luminaries, the program will highlight the broad scope of this Utah story.

*The Nutcracker* documentary program, in chronicling an evergreen holiday favorite, will maintain its relevance for future airings and will have multiple broadcasts over the next five to ten years. BYUtV will stream the program to more than **60 million BYUtV subscribers** and is exploring its release through both the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and cable networks.

## Economic Impact of *The Nutcracker*

The University of Utah's Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute is commissioning an article, authored by David Eccles School of Business associate dean Natalie Gochnour, which will illuminate the nationwide economic impact of *The Nutcracker* over the past 75 years.

## 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *Nutcracker* Performances

Ballet West will celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mr. C's *The Nutcracker* in its 2019–2020 season with more than twenty performances, welcoming a projected 30,000+ patrons over the course of its run at the Janet Quinney Lawson Capitol Theatre in downtown Salt Lake City.

## Make your 75th Anniversary donation today – ignite Mr. C's legacy production of *The Nutcracker* for generations to come!

### FOR A GIFT OF **\$75**, RECEIVE:

- A 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *Nutcracker* commemorative book
- Access to purchase advance tickets to *The Nutcracker* during a priority on-sale period

### FOR A GIFT OF **\$750**, RECEIVE THE BENEFITS LISTED ABOVE, PLUS:

- Two complimentary tickets to opening night of *The Nutcracker* and an invitation to the "Land of the Sweets" party onstage following the performance
- A 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *Nutcracker* commemorative framed poster, signed by Ballet West artists
- A complimentary DVD of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *Nutcracker* documentary program

### FOR A GIFT OF **\$7,500**, RECEIVE THE BENEFITS LISTED ABOVE, PLUS:

- Your name listed in the credits of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *Nutcracker* documentary program
- An invitation for four guests to attend a private, pre-performance dinner celebrating opening night of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *The Nutcracker*, including VIP tickets to the performance and an invitation to the "Land of the Sweets" party onstage following the performance

### FOR A GIFT OF **\$75,000**, RECEIVE THE BENEFITS LISTED ABOVE, PLUS:

- Your name listed as a 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sponsor in the credits of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *Nutcracker* documentary program (to be aired on BYUtV each holiday season for the next 5–10 years)
- An invitation for ten guests to attend a private, pre-performance dinner celebrating opening night of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *The Nutcracker*, including VIP tickets to the performance and an invitation to the "Land of the Sweets" party onstage following the performance
- Ten additional *Nutcracker* tickets to be used throughout the 2019 performance run
- Your name listed as a 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sponsor in Ballet West *Nutcracker* playbills and in the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *Nutcracker* commemorative book