

California Youth Ballet

For immediate release:

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BALLET SLIPPERS, TUTUS, AND MASKS:

Young dancers by the sea put on a masked Nutcracker for spring

Pacifica, CA (March 23, 2021) – Who says you can't go nuts in spring? The California Youth Ballet has produced an online and masked version of The Nutcracker. In normal times the theatrical version of the show is a big fundraiser for the Pacifica based ballet studio. When Covid 19 swept through California the studio had to close for public performances and a huge revenue stream for the ballet school was lost. It also had an emotional impact on the older dancers as this would have been their final Nutcracker before graduating high school and setting off for college. For many it was a painful thought that they wouldn't get the chance to chassé to the chimes of the Sugarplum Fairy just one last time. With the performance space closed there'd be no swansong for the dancers and no money for the ballet school.

Nina Baratova is California Youth Ballet's artistic director and choreographer. Nina reflected that this would be the first time in her forty-year career that she hadn't been involved with a production of The Nutcracker. Then inspiration struck. The school has a strong community base. Many of the parents also participate in the school's productions. Some join the dance, a few make costumes, while others help with scenery and ticket sales. One ballet dad, Adrian Smith, was a writer and video producer. One ballet mom, Adrienne Doherty, was an illustrator and designer. Nina, Adrian, and Adrienne came up with the idea for creating a hybrid version of the show. It would be an online blend of dance, narration, and storybook illustration. Some dances were filmed on mobile phones in the student's homes. The more complex dances were filmed outdoors with the dancers wearing masks. A toymaker's workshop was set up in the backroom of the ballet school and Adrian Smith filmed himself telling the story. It was all then edited together with the illustrations and Tchaikovsky's fantastic music. The show was rebranded as "The Nutcracker Reimagined."

The Nutcracker Reimagined can be watched on the California Youth Ballet's website. The school is asking for \$25.00 donations as the online show is intended to help make up for lost revenue from its traditional holiday performances. The show can be seen here <https://www.cbofca.com/videos>

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