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## NYC BALLET STARS REICHLIN AND LA COUR IN GAINESVILLE BALLET NUTCRACKER

GAINESVILLE, Va. – Gainesville Ballet is pleased to announce two performances of *The Nutcracker* on Friday, November 28, 2014 at 2 PM and 7 PM. The full-length ballet features international guest dancers, the professional dancers of Gainesville Ballet Company, and the students of Gainesville Ballet School. As decorative lights begin to sparkle across homes in Northern Virginia on Thanksgiving weekend, the elegant opera house of the 1,123-seat Merchant Hall at the [Hylton Performing Arts Center](#) will usher in the holiday season with the fanfare of soldiers and mice.

When it comes to twirling pirouettes on-stage at the Hylton Center, the performance will come full circle for the Virginia-born ballerina, [Teresa Reichlen](#), who has risen to the highest ranks of her profession as a New York City Ballet principal dancer. Born in Clifton, Virginia, Reichlen began her dance training at the age of 10 at the Russell School of Ballet with Thomas and Ilona Russell, Mary Rogers, and Margaret McGarry. In 1999, Reichlen studied at the summer program of the School of American Ballet (SAB) at Lincoln Center, the official school of New York City Ballet. She entered SAB full-time in the fall of the same year at age 15. In

October 2000, Reichlen became an apprentice with New York City Ballet, and in October 2001, she joined the Company as a member of the *corps de ballet*. In January 2005, she was promoted to the rank of soloist, and in October 2009, was promoted to principal dancer. Positioned as a top talent with one of the foremost professional ballet companies, Reichlen has had the rare opportunity to dance in featured roles by acclaimed choreographers: George Balanchine, Ulysses Dove, Jormo Elo, William Forsythe, Peter Martins, Jerome Robbins and Christopher Wheeldon. As a striking 5-foot, 9-inch natural talent, “Tess” has learned to build upon her long willowy limbs through an innately-flowing strength and ability that rises from the core, stretching through positions and ranks in the ballet world with an electric elasticity that few ever achieve. In an art where height is not always an advantage, Reichlen stands as a timeless model of rising above conventional characteristics and roles with a pure inertia and aptitude that propel her en pointe, in character, and into the hearts of fans. A small sampling of featured roles since joining the New York City Ballet include the trademarked George Balanchine’s *The Nutcracker* (Sugarplum Fairy, Dewdrop, Coffee), *Firebird*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Titania, Hippolyta), and “Rubies” from *Jewels*. Though Reichlen departed Virginia to experience every dancer’s dream as the eventual principal of a top professional ballet company, she remains closely connected to the roots of her childhood as her parents reside in western Prince William County.



**New York City Ballet – *The Nutcracker***  
*The Sugarplum Fairy and her Cavalier*  
Teresa Reichlen and Ask la Cour  
Credit Photo: © Paul Kolnik

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Reichlen will star in the capable arms of her frequent *pas de deux* partner, [Ask la Cour](#), who has also earned the rank of principal dancer with the world-renowned New York City Ballet. Born in Copenhagen, Denmark, la Cour began his dance training at the age of nine at the Royal Danish Ballet School, where he studied with Niels Balle, Adam Lüders, and Colleen Neary. He joined the Royal Danish Ballet as a member of the *corps de ballet* in 2000. La Cour joined New York City Ballet as a member of the *corps de ballet* in the fall of 2002, was promoted to the rank of soloist in May 2005, and became a principal in February 2013. While at the Royal Danish Ballet, la Cour performed featured roles in August Bournonville's *Napoli* (Pas de Six), John Cranko's *Onegin* (Lensky), Peter Martins' *Hallelujah Junction* and *Swan Lake* (Hungarian), John Neumeier's *Romeo and Juliet* (Monk), Alexei Ratmansky's *The Nutcracker* (Spanish), and Lila York's *Concerto in Pieces* (Pas de Trois). La Cour's dance résumé includes an impressive list of featured principal roles during his long tenure at the NY-based ballet company created by legendary choreographers: George Balanchine, Jorma Elo, Boris Eifman, Peter Martins, Benjamin Millepied, Jerome Robbins, Richard Tanner and Christopher Wheeldon. Paired together once again, Reichlen and la Cour will dance the *grand pas de deux* in Northern Virginia with Gainesville Ballet.



**Gainesville Ballet at the Hylton Performing Arts Center**

*A traditional Nutcracker story – November 2013*

*Snowflakes, Act I with Level 5 youth dancers and international guest stars  
Nour Eldesouki (Nutcracker Prince) and Carolina Boscan (Clara Princess)*

*Photographer: Brian Mengini*

The music for the production is the original score by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky composed *The Nutcracker* in December of 1891. A year later, the première was held at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The commission was to compose a ballet based on Dumas the Elder's version of a Christmas fairy tale by E.T.A Hoffmann. The ballet has gained in popularity through the last century, especially in the United States. The upcoming Gainesville Ballet production will feature choreography and staging by Artistic Director Rafik Hegab based upon the E.T.A. Hoffman story, with beautiful costumes and scenery. Originally from Egypt, Hegab joined the Cairo Opera Ballet Company in 1999, won first place in the Egyptian National Ballet Competition in 2000, rose the ranks to Soloist and Principal Dancer, and embarked on international tours with the company in China, Lebanon, the Czech Republic, Jordan, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, India, Greece, and Russia.

Two international guest stars native to Central America will dance various character roles (Arab Doll, Mouse King, Chinese, Trepak) in Gainesville Ballet's *The Nutcracker*. Other professional dancers on-stage with local children include four [faculty](#) and ballet company members of Gainesville Ballet: Shady Mohamed (Herr Drosselmeyer, Spanish, Marzipan), Onica Patalive Hobbs (Clara's Mother, Flower Solo), Mallory Miller (Parent, Flower Solo), and Tiffani Thomas (Snow Queen). The hometown connection for Virginia-native Teresa Reichlen and the assembly of a three-continent cast of professional dancers who have trained and performed across the globe draws upon the strong diversity of the international arts organization. To learn more about Gainesville Ballet, visit [www.gainesvilleballetcompany.org](http://www.gainesvilleballetcompany.org).



**Gainesville Ballet – November 2013**  
*Party Scene, Act I*  
 Photographer: Brian Mengini

Ballet patrons at the award-winning Hylton Center will be welcomed by an elaborate two-story grand foyer leading to a large auditorium defined by circular balcony seats that glimmer three stories high, an expansive orchestra section, state-of-the-art acoustics and an intimate ambiance. The building structure stands majestically on the Prince William campus of George Mason University as a cultural center for the arts in Northern Virginia. The [location](#) for the upcoming performance is 10960 George Mason Circle in Manassas, Virginia. The facility is rapidly becoming a destination venue for international arts organizations of every theatrical genre. Tickets for the holiday performance of Gainesville Ballet are \$35 for orchestra seats, with discounts for seniors, active duty military, and children under age 12. Balcony seats range from \$15 to \$25. Guests have the option to purchase from the box office at the Hylton Performing Arts Center, online under *Gainesville Ballet* at [www.tickets.com](http://www.tickets.com) or by calling (888) 945-2468. Choose your favorite seats from the comfort of your home, and enjoy the beloved holiday classic as the scurry of mice and clash of swords take center stage in our hearts this season. For more information about the upcoming performance and ticketing, visit <http://www.hyltoncenter.org/calendar/558/>.

With the founding of Gainesville Ballet in 2005, the upcoming 2014-15 season marks the 10th anniversary of the arts institution in Northern Virginia. Professional performers Shady Mohamed, Stephanie Parkinson, Onica Patalive Hobbs, Tiffani Thomas, and Mallory Miller will come together with local youth in Gainesville, Virginia under the leadership of Artistic Director and Principal Dancer, [Rafik Hegab](#), and Managing Director, [Elysabeth Muscat](#). These members will form the core upon which the new season is built with the annual tradition of a *Nutcracker Tea with Clara*, outreach performances, adaptive dance, master classes, in-house demonstrations, and three mainstage productions at the Hylton Performing Arts Center. The programming will feature *The Nutcracker* with two shows on Thanksgiving weekend, *Carmina Burana* in March, and a spring show in June. Professional guest artists will enrich the strong foundation of talent, with a growing circle of dancers to include Carolina Boscan, Nour Eldesouki, Alexandru Glusacov, Evgenia Singur, Melissa Zoebisch, Aly Mahmoud, and New York City Ballet principals, Teresa Reichlen and Ask la Cour.



**Gainesville Ballet – November 2013**  
*Chinese, Act II*  
 Shady Mohamed (center - sauté en l'air) with youth dancers:  
 Phoebe Judkins and Tansy Huang (back L to R)  
 Elle Park and Gabrielle Jeong (front L to R)  
 Photographer: Brian Mengini





**Gainesville Ballet at the Hylton Performing Arts Center**  
*A traditional Nutcracker story – November 2013*  
*Waltz of the Flowers, Act II*  
 Photographer: Brian Mengini

The pairing of professionals of global renown with local talent from metro-D.C. on the regional stages of Manassas, Virginia is one of the great achievements of Gainesville Ballet in bringing seasonal productions to the Hylton Performing Arts Center. The students of Gainesville Ballet will be represented in numerous roles including Clara, Party Guests, Dolls, Snowflakes, Flowers, Angels, Mice, Soldiers, Gingerbread, Trepak, Arabian, Chinese, Marzipan, and Spanish divertissement. Children in the curricular program have the chance to participate in the annual holiday performance starting at age three. The highest level of student classes at Gainesville Ballet is Level 4 and Level 5, with 19 youth dancers learning the most elaborate choreography. These advanced ballerinas range in age from 10 to 17, and travel from a geography that spans two

counties – Prince William and Fauquier – for training and rehearsals that reach an average of 12 to 17 combined hours weekly during the production season. The role of young Clara from Act I will be danced by Elle Park, a Level 5 ballerina. She is age 11, and a sixth grader from Ronald Wilson Reagan Middle School. Nine-year-old Ryan Reilly will entertain audiences as Fritz, the spirited and playful brother of Clara. Ryan is a fourth grader from J.W. Alvey Elementary School.

Residents from across the region can meet young Clara and other dancers and faculty of the school at the upcoming *Nutcracker Tea* at the studios in Gainesville, Virginia on November 16, 2014 for an afternoon celebration of the arts. Guests can enjoy delectable desserts and tea along with a short demonstration of dances from the upcoming performances of *The Nutcracker*. The reception will be held from 4:00 to 5:00 PM for \$15 per person. Tickets for this popular event can be purchased by contacting the ballet school at (703) 753-5005. The first *Nutcracker Teas* were held as an outreach program during the 2012 season for Gainesville Ballet, with an overwhelming response from the girls and boys of the community who left with a belly of sweets and captivated smiles. Ballerinas dressed in beautiful costumes posed for pictures with guests, signed autographs, danced impromptu to the irresistible songs of *The Nutcracker* ballet alongside twirling tots and shared the magic of the performing arts by connecting with the community through a social tea. Pictures of mesmerized children from the annual tradition later appeared on the front page of a newspaper two years in a row.

Alongside Elle Park as Clara, eleven more dancers from Level 5 will perform in many key roles as part of the *corps de ballet*: Caroline Beard, Chloe Banachoski, Emma Dryden, Gabrielle Jeong, Phoebe Judkins, Sara Massei, Rebecca Morneau, Abigail Mumma, Madeline Penn, Isabella Reilly, and Jessica Shalvey. Seven dancers from Level 4 will dance in the production: Ashton Brown, Sophia Browning, Kayla Conrad, Catelyn Fitzpatrick, Aly Fridey, Maris Jones and Abigail Judkins. Jade Condrell, 10, will dance the featured role of Small Nutcracker as a Level 3 student.

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In addition to annual *Nutcracker* performances, Gainesville Ballet brought an inaugural spring production to the performing arts community with *Coppélia* in 2012; *Swan Lake, Act II* in 2013; and *Le Corsaire, Act III* in 2014. The ballet company and school recently presented *Le Corsaire, Act III* for the first time, as the organization builds a repertory of four classical ballets: *Nutcracker*, *Coppélia*, *Swan Lake* and *Le Corsaire*. Even though *Le Corsaire* was new to the formal body of artistic works at Gainesville Ballet, the faculty and students brought a wide range of role experiences to the stage. Two youth dancers performed in *Le Corsaire* with American Ballet Theatre (ABT) at the Kennedy Center in April 2013 – Abigail Mumma and Sara Massei. This is the second time for each ballerina to perform on-stage at the Kennedy Center. Sara Massei and Isabella Reilly were selected for the 2014 summer intensives at American Ballet Theater and the Kirov Academy of Ballet. Abigail Mumma and Caroline Beard participated in the RUBY International Summer Intensive at Radford University in the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Historically, many students travel from disparate locations to study in the arts program; the school has drawn students from zip codes that span ten counties in Virginia and Maryland for instruction: Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Manassas City, Montgomery, Prince William, and Warren. In 2013, class registrations for the Fall semester reached

across two state boundaries to 14 cities: Bealeton, Bethesda, Bristow, Broad Run, Burke, Catharpin, Haymarket, Gainesville, Jeffersonston, Linden, Manassas, Nokesville, Paris, and Warrenton. Theater-goers from the performance of a traditional *Nutcracker* story at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in November 2013 represented eight states and 47 cities. People reached in a social media network for Gainesville Ballet in a 28-day interval in September 2014 spanned 45 countries: United States of America, United Kingdom, Egypt, Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Germany, Guatemala, Greece, Canada, Italy, France, Russia, Australia, Spain, Turkey, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Philippines, Switzerland, Peru, Chile, Japan, India, Costa Rica, Netherlands, South Africa, Portugal, Bulgaria, Malaysia, Singapore, Kuwait, Austria, Denmark, China, New Zealand, Ghana, Tunisia, Norway, South Korea, Croatia, Barbados, and Dominican Republic. This global population covers 38 languages and 45 cities from New York to London, England; Washington, D.C. to Glasgow, Scotland; Boston to Belfast, Northern Ireland; Los Angeles to Liverpool, England; Atlanta to Nottingham, England; and Chicago to Cairo, Egypt.

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**Gainesville Ballet at the Hylton Performing Arts Center**

*A traditional Nutcracker story*

*Caroline Beard (Clara) for Act I in November 2013*

*Photographer: Brian Mengini*

**Media Notes:** *Flash photography/illuminated videography is permitted at rehearsals when coordinated with Gainesville Ballet, but prohibited during performances. A question-and-answer page with a student dancer in a lead role has been provided in the appendix. Interviews with Elysabeth Muscat and participating dancers are available on request. Biographical data such as age, grade and schools for the advanced student dancers are provided as an appendix for editorial staff. As a theatrical production, cast assignments are subject to change. Additional photographic images will be released through an [online gallery](#) in advance of the performance and following the event. Photos are also available in a variety of compositions upon request.*

**QUESTION AND ANSWER**

An interview with young Clara from Act I gives the unique perspective of a ballerina in a starring role for the upcoming production at a regional center for the performing arts. The responses are provided as a *Question* and *Answer* format with Elle Park, age 11, a sixth grader from Ronald Wilson Reagan Middle School. Residents from across the region can meet young Clara and other dancers and faculty of the school at the upcoming *Nutcracker Tea* at the studios in Gainesville, Virginia on November 16, 2014 for an afternoon celebration of the arts.

1. Performing the role of Clara in Act I at the Hylton Performing Arts Center with Gainesville Ballet is a great achievement in your professional dance career. What does it mean to you as a person, as a dancer, and as a part of the community?

“I think that it's impressive to be able to perform the role of Clara as a person. As a dancer, I would think that trying so hard to do my best is worth it! Being part of a community, I get butterflies in my stomach because my teachers thankfully have chosen me to be Clara. I am grateful to my teachers, Mr. Rafik and Mr. Shady, for helping me to be a better performer!”

2. How does the character you will portray reflect upon you as an individual?

“I think that Clara is like me because I'm almost everything like her.”

3. What words would you share with pre-professional dancers who wish to aspire to a role such as Clara? What would you tell young students who are interested in studying dance?

“Practice to get better and try your best. My mother would say, ‘It's ok to make a mistake, it just makes you stronger.’ If you’re up to a challenge, then this will be the right fit.”

**BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FOR ADVANCED STUDENT DANCERS**

The biographical data for the advanced student dancers in *The Nutcracker* is provided for editorial reference.

## Level 5:

Caroline Beard, age 17, a twelfth grader from [Kettle Run High School](#)

Abigail Mumma, age 17, a twelfth grader from [Patriot High School](#)

Jessica Shalvey, age 17, a twelfth grader from [Patriot High School](#)

Emma Dryden, age 16, an eleventh grader from [Battlefield High School](#)

Chloe Banachoski, age 15, a ninth grader from [Brentsville District High School](#)

Rebecca Morneau, age 15, an eleventh grader who is homeschooled in Fauquier County

Madeline Penn, age 15, a tenth grader from [Patriot High School](#)

Sara Massei, age 14, a ninth grader from [Kettle Run High School](#)

Isabella Reilly, age 14, a ninth grader from [Battlefield High School](#)

Phoebe Judkins, age 13, an eighth grader who is homeschooled

Gabrielle Jeong, age 12, a seventh grader from [Gainesville Middle School for the Arts and Sciences](#)

Elle Park, age 11, a sixth grader from [Ronald Wilson Reagan Middle School](#)

## Level 4:

Ashton Brown, age 16, an eleventh grader who is homeschooled

Catelyn Fitzpatrick, age 14, an eighth grader from [Ronald Wilson Reagan Middle School](#)

Aly Fridey, age 13, a seventh grader from [Ronald Wilson Reagan Middle School](#)

Sophia Browning, age 12, a sixth grader from [Gainesville Middle School for the Arts and Sciences](#)

Abigail Judkins, age 12, a seventh grader who is homeschooled

Kayla Conrad, age 10, a fifth grader from [Bristow Run Elementary School](#)

Maris Jones, age 10, a fifth grader from [Buckland Mills Elementary School](#)

## Level 3:

Jade Condrell, age 10, a fifth grader from [Highland School](#) in featured role of Small Nutcracker