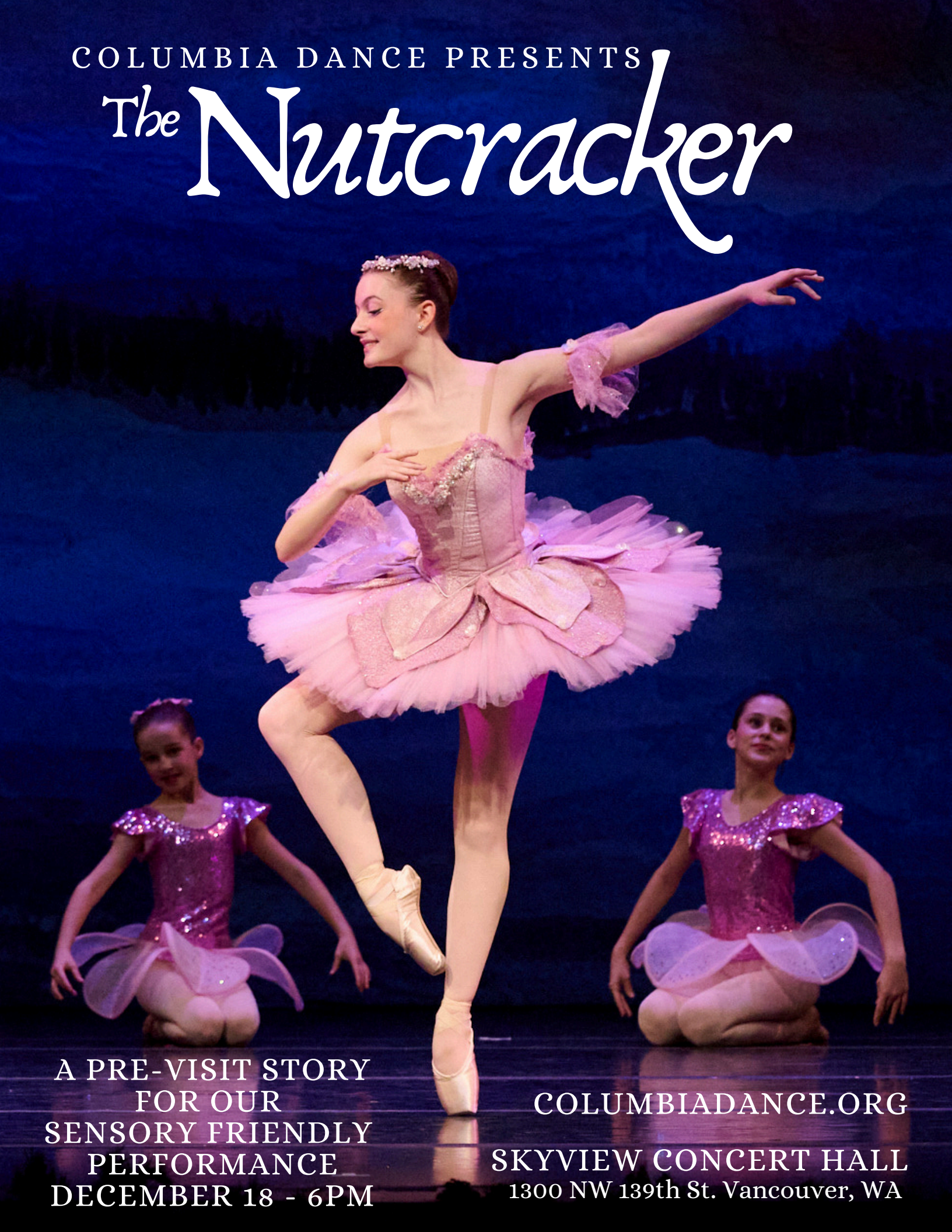

COLUMBIA DANCE PRESENTS
The Nutcracker
A PRE-VISIT STORY
FOR OUR
SENSORY FRIENDLY
PERFORMANCE
DECEMBER 18 - 6PM
COLUMBIADANCE.ORG
SKYVIEW CONCERT HALL
1300 NW 139th St. Vancouver, WA

The Auditorium

I am going to Skyview High School Auditorium to see The Nutcracker ballet.
Skyview High School is a theater.

A ballet tells a story through dancing.



The Lobby

When we walk in the front door we will enter the theater lobby. There will be a ticket desk for us to check in for the performance and a shop selling ornaments and other items. There will also be a display that tells us about the story.

We will meet the ushers who will help us to our seats.
If I need help, I can ask an usher.
If I need to take a break, the ushers can help me.







Theater

When it's almost time for the performance to begin, a person on stage will welcome me and the other people watching the show.

When I am watching a show in the theater, I am part of the audience. The audience claps for parts they like and when a dancer finishes a dance The clapping only lasts a short time.

When the show is about to begin the lights in the theater will dim a little bit. It will not be dark in the theater. There will be some lights on.

There is a big curtain at the front of the stage. The curtain opens when the performance starts. The curtain makes a squeaky noise when it opens. There will be a 15 minute break halfway through the show.

About 3 minutes into the performance some costumed performers will walk down the theater aisles near the audience. This is part of the show.



Costumes

Dancers wear costumes to show their character in the story. Wearing a costume is like playing dress up.

Even if the character doesn't look like a person, it is a dancer in a costume. The beavers have big hats that cover the dancers' heads.



Music and Noise

I will hear music during the ballet. The music helps tell the story. Sometimes the music is faster. Sometimes the music is slower. Sometimes the music is softer, and sometimes the music is louder. If the music is too loud, I can cover my ears.

Sometimes the music might make strange sounds like clicking, whistles, or cymbals. This only lasts a short time.



Scenery

Scenery is the background and walls on the stage. Scenery helps us know where the story takes place. Sometimes the scenery moves.

At the start of the show the scenery shows us inside a house with green walls. Later these walls turn around to show us we are outside by a big log wall. Even later these walls go away to show us a beautiful snowy mountain.

In this video you can see how we tried to make the scenery look like Fort Vancouver!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVHQIuelb9o



Lights

Stage lights help tell the story. Sometimes it is bright onstage. Sometimes it is dark on stage.

The dark parts only last a short time. We use a special light call a projection to make it look like it is snowing on stage or a starry night.



Magic

There is lots of pretend magic in our show. We make it look like tiny dolls grow into life size people. It is all make believe.





Plot

Dancers tell the story using their bodies and movement. They don't talk to tell the story.

Sometimes there are lots of dancers on stage. Sometimes there are just a few.

Dancers move on and off stage. When the dancers go off stage, they go behind the stage. They may come back on stage later.



Act 1



Our story begins with Cecilia, Jane, and Agnes Douglas getting ready for Fort Vancouver's holiday party. The year is 1845 and their father is the Chief Trader for the fort. This means that their family lives in a beautiful home inside the fort's walls. Their father, James, and mother, Amelia, are hosting the annual holiday party and the children are anxiously waiting for the guests to arrive.





We see families walking to the party, excited for all of the festivities to come! People came from all over the world to live and work at Fort Vancouver. We see a family from Scotland, and a couple from Hawaii. We see a Naval Lieutenant from England who brings 3 navy midshipman to the party. Did you know that in the 1800's boys as young as 14 years old had jobs on the ships that sailed all the way across the oceans?





Once the guests have all arrived, it's time to decorate the dining room. The steward brings forth garlands of greenery. The children dance with the garlands before hanging them around the room to add some holiday cheer. Once the parents leave the room to play cards, the children begin to search for hidden presents. They have just found one when . . .





A new guest arrives! It's Dr. McLoughlin, the fort's Chief Factor. And wait . . . he's brought someone else with him. Everyone knows Dr. McLoughlin, but who is this fellow who accompanies him? Aha- it's a fur trapper named Simon who works outside the fort's walls. And he's brought a gift. He's brought Mr. Douglas a beaver pelt. Now this is quite a treat. You see, beaver pelts were one of the most valuable items in Fort Vancouver in the 1840's and that's because every gentleman aspired to have a beaver felt top hat. It was the height of fashion as well as a status symbol.
Cecilia is quite mesmerized with this boy from the village. Simon regales her with tales of life outside the fort's walls . . . of canoe trips to hunt for beavers . . . of the beautiful iridescence of newly fallen snow on the banks of the Columbia River . . . of people from all over the world creating a life in the village of Fort Vancouver- Castaways whose ship was lost at sea and ended up in Fort Vancouver instead of Japan, Voyageurs from French Canada, Indigenous peoples from nations like the Chinook and Cowlitz, people from Hawaii and Scotland and whole groups of people arriving in wagons after journeying across the country on the Oregon Trail.



Cecilia could listen to the Fur Trapper all night, but Dr. McLoughlin has some tricks up his sleeve, or rather, his hat. First it's apple upon apple appearing as if from nowhere. What a tasty treat for the children! Next, it's presents for everyone. And wait, there is still more. 3 dolls come to life- a dancing Sugar Plumeria, a dancing Moon Woman, and a dancing Beaver! Oh my! The beaver gets quite rambunctious and the brave Fur Trapper must intervene, chasing him out of the house through the fireplace.







Well, now Cecilia is quite sad. Her new friend has disappeared and she didn't even get a chance to say goodbye.
Dr. McLoughlin tries to cheer her with a beautiful doll, but it's no use. Her spirits are quite low. Desperate to console her, Dr. McLoughlin performs one final magic trick. He goes to the fireplace and pulls out a Nutcracker doll that looks exactly like the fur trapper who just left through the fireplace! Cecilia is grateful to have a keepsake to remember her friend by, and dances happily with her Nutcracker doll.

Like all good things, the party must come to an end. The guests say their goodbyes and trek off to their homes. Dr. McLoughlin dozes on the couch and Cecilia changes into her pajamas and goes to sleep in her bed.
She can't wait to see what she dreams about after such a magical evening!



Oh what a dream Cecilia has! She dreams of tiny beaver kits swarming her dining room in search of Dr. McLoughlin's hat. They are tired of people hunting them just to create these silly hats. It is time they did something about it. They will steal the hat in revenge! Their leader, Le Castor, commands them to seize the hat and then uses its magic to transform the beaver kits into bigger beavers.









But wait just a second. Dr. McLoughlin wakes up and catches the rodent thieves in the act. He is not going to hand over his hat without a fight. He steals it back and transforms the Nutcracker doll into the real life Fur Trapper, Simon, who summons his fur trapping crew to battle the beavers. An epic battle ensues. In the end, Le Castor thumps the Fur Trapper on the head with a log and the Fur Trapper is left injured on the ground. While Cecilia and Dr. McLoughlin rush to his aid, the beavers swoop in to swipe the hat yet again. Le Castor triumphantly exits wearing the top hat.

Cecilia is devastated. Is Simon alright? She begs Dr. McLoughlin to save him. He rouses the Fur Trapper. He is groggy and likely has a lump on his head, but he will be fine. Cecilia is so relieved. She invites him to dance with her and the two dance their way through the quiet forest.

But wait! Someone else is there. A beautiful woman appears and calls out to the moon, inviting it to glisten on the freshly fallen snow. She then beckons to the snowflakes and they begin to dance, welcoming Cecilia to the world outside the fort's walls.

What a wonderful dream it has been, and it has only just begun!





Act 2



When the show starts up again we see Cecilia asleep in her bed. We see that Cecilia dreams about the Moon Woman, the Beavers and Fur Trappers, and the wonderful holiday party.

It seems like just a dream until Dr. McLoughlin returns with his magical hat and once again makes the Sugar Plumeria doll come to life. Cecilia wakes up to see the Sugar Plumeria Fairy dancing with her tiny Plumerias. The Plumerias welcome Cecilia. Suddenly Simon appears to introduce Cecilia to his friends in the village of Fort Vancouver.

One by one each group of people dances.

First it is the Castaways. They tell the tale of their long voyage at sea. A storm snapped their ship's rudder, preventing them from reaching Tokyo and leaving them adrift on the ocean for 14 months before finally reaching land 5,000 miles away in North America where they were brought to Fort Vancouver by Dr. McLoughlin.





Next it is a Voyageur who paddles her canoe over to greet the newcomers, carried by dancing water. She gifts her canoe to the Fur Trapper, but he is not sure where to take it.

As the Voyageur leaves, the dancing water form a river from which beautiful wapato plants sway and grow. A majestic salmon struggles to swim upstream, but succeeds in the end. Did you know that the wapato plant was an important food source for many indigenous groups? To harvest the plant they had to wade into the water and loosen the roots with their toes.



Now the night grows starry and we meet enchanting stargazers who seem to communicate with the stars. Reading the celestial map, they guide the Fur Trapper on where to sail his canoe to. Did you know that many Hawaiians sailed to Fort Vancouver in the 1800's? They were known for their skillful navigation at sea using natural elements like stars as guides.



Next we meet the Fort's clerks in full Scottish dress. They are checking the trading post ledger and tidying the store.





Here comes a covered wagon straight from the Oregon Trail.
The poor children who emerge are exhausted and hungry after a long cross-country journey.
Thank goodness Dr. McLoughlin appears with a basket of snacks to revive them and get them back to their childhood antics.

Next, we see beautiful Camas Flowers dancing in the breeze.



The evening reaches a magical crescendo when the Sugar Plumeria herself dances, and then she and her Cavalier summon all of the villagers to dance with Cecilia one last time.





What a joy it has been for Cecilia to meet so many new friends. She is reveling in her adventure when it slowly starts to fade away. Goodbyes are never easy, but the memory of this night will be something she cherishes forever. With her Fur Trapping Nutcracker doll held to her heart, she slumbers peacefully knowing that she will never forget Simon and the incredible world he introduced her to.



