



For Immediate Release  
October 2009

Contact: Kathryn Henschen  
410-877-0777

### **A Unique *Nutcracker* Experience**

The County's First Professional Ballet Company takes to the Stage for the Holidays

**Aberdeen, Maryland** – This Holiday season Harford, Cecil, and Baltimore County audiences will delight in Harford Ballet's unparalleled presentation of *The Nutcracker*. This American favorite is loved by all audiences and provides the perfect choice for anyone experiencing ballet for the first time, or for those rare seasoned balletomanes looking for a unique twist! Children are engaged in the story of the magical Uncle Drosselmeyer, a young girl named Clara, and her handsome Nutcracker Prince. Together they battle the evil Rat King in a sword duel and travel to the enchanted *Kingdom of the Sweets*.

The timeless music of Tchaikovsky is easily recognized by all audience members and HBC's dancers will present a breathtaking display of technique and artistry. This year, HBC is pleased to present it's newly formed professional division comprised of dancers from professional companies and universities throughout Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York City. This noteworthy step for HBC offers the Harford community its first and only professional ballet company, setting the precedent for fine arts in the county.

As Executive Director, Pamela Villeneuve announces, "The professionalism of the whole package is truly amazing. Coming to a Harford Ballet production is an enchanting experience from start to finish, and one audience members will never forget. The dancing, the atmosphere – it all comes together to create an unforgettable trip to the theater and really helps to put you in the holiday spirit. "

In addition to providing a high caliber event, Harford Ballet also prides itself on offering a unique theater experience by introducing a special "breaking of the barrier" experience for young guests. During the party scene, children in the audience are invited onstage to take a small part in the production. This will give all young guests a chance to sit next to Clara and experience Uncle Drosselmeyer's magic up close! This unique element, rarely found at theater events, gives children a chance to be part of the ballet and is sure to create memories that will last long after the holiday season.

In keeping with the holiday spirit, the Harford Ballet Company continues a special association with the Aegis Empty Stocking Fund that truly brings the spirit of the season to life. For more than 75 years, the Empty Stocking Fund has been helping to provide a brighter holiday season to underprivileged children throughout Harford County. annually joins the Empty Stocking Fund in its appeal to the kindness of our community by asking *Nutcracker* patrons to bring a donation of a new and unwrapped children's gift to the performance. Guests will be invited onstage during the show to place their gift under Clara's Enchanted Tree. These gifts will help give a magical holiday to less fortunate children in Harford County so that everyone can have a holiday to remember.

“Our contributions help our dancers know that their commitment and dedication to the arts of ballet is benefiting others, and that gives them great purpose,” states Pamela Villeneuve. “Together we can bring joy to very deserving children who may not receive gifts this holiday season.”

Following each show, the Harford Ballet will host a Gala Nutcracker Tea Party where guests will have the opportunity to meet and interact with the costumed characters from the ballet while enjoying holiday refreshments and an enchanting “Wintery” atmosphere. A beautiful photo area is created for guests to take pictures with the performers of their choice and children are able to meet with and request autographs from their favorite characters. This will be a unforgettable chance to meet The Nutcracker, Clara, Sugar Plum Fairy, and all the other characters from the ballet. Refreshments will include beautiful holiday cookies and treats as well as fresh brewed tea and coffee.

When asked what makes the tea party so special for families, Artistic Director, Barclay Pease responds, “The Tea Party is an exciting event for young children. There are few theater experiences where children are able to meet their favorite characters up close, look at their costumes, and ask for autographs or photos. The tea party is set up with the same magical atmosphere as the stage so it becomes a continuation of the performance where children can interact with the ballet’s characters.” The Harford Ballet Company’s Gala Tea Party is a favored and often sold out event which gives their *Nutcracker* yet another unique touch.

Sponsored by Comcast and supported in part by both the Maryland State Arts Council and Harford County Cultural Arts Board, this breathtaking presentation of the Nutcracker ballet will feature the local talents of the full Harford Ballet Company as well as guest performers Abi Stafford and Tyler Angle from the New York City Ballet. Please join the county’s leading professional ballet company as they enchant a growing audience and bring you the best Harford County has to offer!

**Ticket Prices for *Nutcracker*:**

**Performance: \$17- \$23 in advance; \$25 at the door**

**Tea Party: \$5 (advance sales required)**

**Please call the Harford Ballet Company at 410-877-0777 for further ticket information, or visit their web site at [www.harfordballetcompany.org](http://www.harfordballetcompany.org)**