

urban Nutcracker

TONY
WILLIAMS
DANCE CENTER

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URBAN NUTCRACKER TO HOST AUTISM-FRIENDLY SHOW Beloved Boston Show to Produce Sensory-Friendly Performance

BOSTON, MA, November 4, 2015- The Urban Nutcracker is delighted to announce its second ever Autism-Friendly performance on Saturday, December 19 at 11:00AM at John Hancock Hall in Boston's Back Bay.

"Thank you so much to our friends at Urban Nutcracker! The best present anyone can receive during the holiday season is to be included and valued," said Russ Kenn, Executive Director of New England Autism Speaks. The show will be tailored to be sensory friendly in order for maximum audience comfort that will feature house lights at half capacity, sounds lower in volume/intensity, volunteers to provide support, and a quiet area. And the audience will be encouraged to dance, sing and shout! Also, this year's Urban Nutcracker features never before seen sets and costumes in celebration of its 15th Anniversary.

"It's great to have shows that are specially inclusive, and I think it's great that we're doing it again!," said Nora who is 11 and playing the part of "Clarice" in this year's production.

"The highlight of the 2014 Urban Nutcracker run was the Autism-Friendly show we produced," said Tony Williams, Artistic Director. "We created this show to encourage even more accessibility to the arts, and it was very touching to see such an energetic and appreciative audience, and I am greatly looking forward to it this year. I'd like to thank all the wonderful Autism advocacy groups out there for the tireless work they do."

Williams re-imagined the classic holiday tale to become a Boston inner-city story with a neon-buzz that blends the rhythms of Duke Ellington with the classical notes of Tchaikovsky. Annually 150 professional and amateur dancers take to the stage to showcase a broad diversity of dance forms celebrating multicultural Boston. The story follows the magical journey of Clarice and Omar through classical ballet, tap, hip hop, jazz, folklorico, flamenco and more.

Laura attended the Autism-Friendly show last year with her son: "From the moment we arrived at the theatre, the caring staff and artists made us feel comfortable, safe and welcome. It was an amazing experience to watch Daniel's face light up with joy during the show."

The Urban Nutcracker Autism-Friendly performance takes place on **Saturday, December 19 at 11AM** at John Hancock Hall, 180 Berkeley Street in Boston's Back Bay. Tickets are available on <http://urbannutcracker.com>. Special group discounts are available.

About Urban Nutcracker: *The Urban Nutcracker celebrates multicultural Boston through a broad range of diverse dance styles. Produced by the Tony Williams Dance Center, the Urban Nutcracker harnesses the power the arts to unite diverse communities to be a catalyst for positive social change.*

About Tony Williams: *Tony Williams is a dance pioneer and retired international ballet star. Williams' dance philosophy uses the arts to unite diverse communities in Boston, having had direct experience on how transformative the arts can be on young lives. As a young man, he gained access to Boston Ballet's dance program and progressed to become their first African-American principal dancer. From there he danced with the Joffery Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and performed all over the world. When Williams retired, he returned to Jamaica Plain, where it all began, and opened a dance school. Not long after, he produced the beloved Urban Nutcracker which annually enjoys a successful run downtown. Widely respected as a progressive dance educator, Williams has won the Dance Teacher Magazine Award and Wheelock Family Theater's Wheel Award. In 2014, he founded the Tony Williams Ballet and expanded his dance school to Concord, Mass.*