



Anthony Williams’ “Urban Nutcracker” Returns This Holiday Season to the Boch Center Shubert Theatre

The buzzy Boston production brings its core mission of “diversity through dance” to the stage with ballet, hip-hop, tap, and more. All set to music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Duke Ellington

Highlights include the inclusion of Bollywood dance, a partnership with the *Fédération Régionale de Danse de la Guadeloupe* to bring dancers from Guadeloupe, and an LGBTQ+-inclusive performance

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For Immediate Release (October 31, 2023)—[Anthony Williams’ “Urban Nutcracker”](#), the contemporary Boston-centric holiday classic presented by City Ballet of Boston, returns to the Boch Center Shubert Theatre this December! This production celebrates the city of Boston with winter scenes set in present-day downtown Boston, blending the rhythms of Duke Ellington with the classical music of Tchaikovsky. Anchored by classical ballet, the performances this year include a broad range of dance styles such as tap, hip-hop, flamenco, and jazz, accompanied by an 8-piece live orchestra of local musicians.

Tony Williams says, “For 22 years Anthony Williams’ *Urban Nutcracker* has been celebrating diversity through dance. Our production is a show I created to honor Boston and our history, featuring a number of local iconic landmarks. The performances capture the essence of the traditional *Nutcracker* story, while using the glorious music of Tchaikovsky along with the dynamic addition of the incomparable Duke Ellington, played live by the Urban Nut/Band. One never gets bored while watching the many dance styles. We feature ballet with Snowflake Fairies dancing on pointe to Bollywood, Tap, Hip Hop, Flamenco and Swing!”

Featuring new and original cast members, “Urban Nutcracker” can be enjoyed by the whole family, and all ages! Returning to the Urban Nutcracker cast this year are former Boston Ballet dancers Gianni DiMarco and Sabi Varga as Drosselmeyer, along with tap phenomenon Khalid Hill and Complexions Contemporary Ballet dancer Joe González. González, born and raised in Boston, has performed nationally and internationally with Philadanco, Anna Myer & Dancers, Prometheus Dance, #dbdanceproject, and has been in the Urban Nutcracker cast since 2010. Also showcased—Boston’s own Hip Hop phenom, Isiah Movelikeyzay Beasley, and the high jumping wunderkind, Demetrius Lee!

New this year: elements of Bollywood dance are incorporated into the Prologue, and a new partnership with the Fédération Régionale de Danse de la Guadeloupe brings young dancers from the island of Guadeloupe to Boston to perform in this year's production. Returning this year is the authentic Flamenco divertissement choreographed by Sabrina Aviles, Director of the Spanish Dance Theater. *Urban Nutcracker* brings an LGBTQ+-inclusive version of the production for its fourth year on December 22.

Deemed "a holiday arts tradition reflecting the rich multicultural diversity of Boston" by The Boston Globe, more than 150 performers – local children and professional dancers – take the stage in this joyful rendition of heroine Clarice's adventure with the street magician Drosselmeyer.

They explore iconic Boston landmarks such as the "Make Way for Ducklings" statues, the golden dome of the State House, the Boston Public Garden, Fenway Park's "Green Monster," the Citgo sign, the Hatch Shell, and Downtown Boston. The stage comes alive with hundreds of colorful costumes re-imagined by designer Dustin Todd Rennells (originally designed by Rebecca Cross) with eye-catching sets by Janie Howland. Scott Clyve's vivid lighting design beautifully captures the vibrant colors in a framework of beauty.

"We couldn't be happier to host City Ballet of Boston's iconic *Urban Nutcracker* again this year," said Joe Spaulding, President & CEO of the Boch Center. "*Urban Nutcracker* was built around themes of inclusion, community and diversity. Sharing this type of programming with the City of Boston is central to the Boch Center's mission and we value our partnership with City Ballet greatly."

More Information:

Urban Nutcracker will play the Boch Center Shubert Theatre (265 Tremont St, Boston, MA 02116).

Tickets are available at the Boch Center Box Office, <https://www.bochcenter.org/events/detail/urbannutcracker>, or by calling (866) 348-9738.

Groups of 10 or more may reserve discounted tickets now by contacting Boch Center Group Sales at (617) 532-1116 or groups@bochcenter.org.

Ticket Prices: \$29-\$125

Saturday, December 16 at 2:00 PM

Saturday, December 16 at 7:00 PM – PRESS NIGHT

Sunday, December 17 at 1:00 PM

Sunday, December 17 at 5:30 PM

Thursday, December 21 at 7:00 PM

Friday, December 22 at 7:00 PM (LGBTQ+ Inclusive Performance)

Saturday, December 23 at 2:00 PM

Saturday, December 23 at 7:00 PM

All performances are approximately 2 hours with one 20 minute intermission.

Praise for *Urban Nutcracker*:

“When Drosselmeyer’s magic whisks [Clarice] off to the Boston Common, the Snow Queen and Snow King usher in a lovely, eye-catching sequence of dancing snowflakes that is well-crafted and skillfully danced.” -*The Boston Globe*

“[Urban Nutcracker] continues to defy tradition while solidifying itself as a local holiday icon... You’ll find a menagerie of bright colors, modern dance, and a swinging score.” - *WGBH, Open Studio with Jared Bowen*

“A modern take on the classic 19th century ballet.” - *NBC Boston*

“Hip-hop holiday fun... [with] enthusiasm and a sense of inclusive community onstage.” -*The Boston Globe*

“*Urban Nutcracker* has become a staple in Boston during the holiday season.” - *Huffington Post*

“The quintessential show of the holiday season.” - *The Patriot Ledger*

About City Ballet of Boston

City Ballet of Boston (CBB) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that provides quality dance training to a diverse urban community allowing it to run an elite professional company. The company is built on a robust values system of inclusiveness and believes that diversity through dance heightens creativity both in the studio and on the stage. The core philosophy of a rigorous dance curriculum is that quality dance builds physical and mental discipline and is also an excellent means of cultural education.

CBB has in place a rich training program to deliver a quality dance education, focused primarily on ballet, in a comprehensively supportive environment. The training provided goes beyond dance, and students will receive support and guidance to develop better connections with each other and their communities. This is a significant step in achieving the ultimate goal of creating more professional dancers of color and for these dancers to experience personal growth and development to sustain them through their careers and beyond. The company's scholarship training program, Boston City Youth Ballet, offers two levels for young dancers. The introductory Relevé & intermediate Developpé levels (ages 8-11) is perfect for beginning students who are eager to learn. For more advanced dancers ages 12-18, the Allongé level focuses on both technique and performing artistry. The program, now in its fourth year, is funded in part by the Carl & Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation. Cityballetofboston.org

About *Urban Nutcracker* and Tony Williams

“Urban Nutcracker” celebrates multicultural Boston through a broad range of diverse dance styles. “Urban Nutcracker” harnesses the power of the arts to unite diverse communities to be a catalyst for positive social change. Presenting sponsor of Urban Nutcracker is Adage Capital Management.

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 a principal dancer. From there he danced with the Joffrey Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and performed all over the world. When Williams retired, he returned to his hometown of Jamaica Plain, where it all began, and opened a dance school. Not long after, he created the beloved *Urban Nutcracker* which annually enjoys a successful run in downtown Boston. Widely respected as a progressive dance educator, Williams has won the 2019 Boston Dance Alliance Dance Champion Award, the 2011 Dance Teacher Magazine Award, and the 2008 Wheelock Family Theater’s Wheel Award alongside Jacques D’Amboise. urbannutcracker.com

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