



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

**The production - with an inner city twist - 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 debut of Flamenco star Nino de los Reyes and an LGBTQ+ inclusive performance**

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For Immediate Release (October 28, 2024)—[Anthony Williams’ “Urban Nutcracker”](#), a contemporary holiday classic that captures the spirit of Boston, returns to the Boch Center Shubert Theatre December 14-22! This enchanting production showcases winter scenes set against the backdrop of downtown Boston, blending the vibrant rhythms of Duke Ellington with Tchaikovsky's timeless compositions. Anchored in classical ballet, this year’s performances feature a diverse array of dance styles—including tap, hip-hop, breakdance, flamenco, and jazz—all accompanied by an 8-piece live ensemble of talented local musicians.

Tony Williams says, “This production, now in its 24th year, is a tribute to Boston and its history, featuring iconic local landmarks. It beautifully intertwines the classic Nutcracker narrative with the timeless music of Tchaikovsky, enhanced by the vibrant sounds of Duke Ellington, performed live by the Urban Nut/Band. Everyone is welcome; join us to celebrate the holiday season!”

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.

Featuring new and original cast members, “Urban Nutcracker” can be enjoyed by the whole family, and all ages! Acclaimed Flamenco artist Nino de los Reyes makes his “Urban Nutcracker” debut alongside longtime favorites such as tap phenomenon Khalid Hill, fresh from his performance in the holiday movie, *Spirited*; former Boston Ballet dancer Gianni DiMarco as Drosselmeyer; Boston native Joe Gonzáles, a member of the New York based Complexions dance company; the talented Boston-based ballerina Ruth Whitney; and Isiah “MoveLikeZay”

Beasley, the Hip-Hop wonder, dances as the Soldier Doll.

Bollywood dance is again incorporated into the Prologue, and the second year of a partnership with the Fédération Régionale de Danse de la Guadeloupe brings young dancers from the French island of Guadeloupe to Boston.

“Urban Nutcracker” brings its lively LGBTQ+-inclusive version of the production for its fifth year on December 20 featuring Boston drag artist Patty Bourrée.

The production explores 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, Fort Hill, Revere Beach 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're thrilled to welcome City Ballet of Boston's "Urban Nutcracker" back to the Boch Center this year," said Casey Soward, President & CEO of the Boch Center. "For over two decades, this production has stood as a celebration of community, diversity, and the power of storytelling through dance. Our partnership with City Ballet strengthens our commitment to showcasing Boston's vibrant talent and keeping the arts as a unifying force for all in our community."

### **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, [bochcenter.org/urbannutcracker](http://bochcenter.org/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](mailto:groups@bochcenter.org).

Ticket Prices: \$29-\$125

Saturday, December 14 at 2:00 PM  
Saturday, December 14 at 7:00 PM – PRESS NIGHT  
Sunday, December 15 at 1:00 PM  
Sunday, December 15 at 5:30 PM  
Thursday, December 19 at 7:00 PM  
Friday, December 20 at 7:00 PM (LGBTQ+ Inclusive Performance)  
Saturday, December 21 at 2:00 PM  
Saturday, December 21 at 7:00 PM  
Sunday, December 22 at 1:00 PM  
Sunday, December 22 at 5:30 PM

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

### **Praise for *Urban Nutcracker*:**

“Urban Nutcracker” might as well be called “The Boston Nutcracker.” Tony Williams’ interpretation of E.T.A. Hoffmann’s Christmas story embraces the city’s modern diversity with sets featuring the Public Garden, a strong performance-art community, multiracial and military families, a gay-friendly environment and all that is great about the Hub. The artistic director also melds the classic score of Tchaikovsky with the jazzy soundtrack of Duke Ellington.” - *Boston Metro*

“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 three levels for young dancers. The introductory Relevé & intermediate Developpé levels (ages 8-11) are 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 fifth year, is funded

in part by the Carl & Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation. [Cityballetofboston.org](http://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](http://urbannutcracker.com)

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