

Dear NCBE Families, Friends, and Supporters

I hope that everyone is having a successful start to summer and have been able to enjoy the beautiful weather we have been experiencing. I know the current events involving the COVID-19 pandemic have drastically impacted each of us over the last few months and continue to be a challenge. As our thoughts begin to transition from the summer to the fall, questions concerning NCBE's production of The Nutcracker have been raised. Unfortunately, to address these questions, I would have liked to offer something more positive than the following response: The 2020 NCBE production of The Nutcracker as well as other NCBE activities have been cancelled until further notice.

I cannot express my sympathy to all the participants, parents, families, friends and viewers enough. I know many have been looking forward to trying to resemble some sort of normalcy and were looking forward to auditions, rehearsals, the performances and we cannot be there to assist you. I am so sorry for the Seniors who won't be able to put a final stamp on their Nutcracker journey that many have travelled for the last five, ten and more years. I am so sorry for the dancers who have been practicing and would perform with their pointe shoes for the first time during a production. I am so sorry for the young girls who have been looking to become the next Claire. I am so sorry that we won't be able to see all the little ones who just wanted to be a mouse or a little soldier. I am so sorry that we won't be able to welcome and see our professionals this season. Finally, I am so sorry that we won't be able to provide an environment that we as parents, participants, friends and family won't be able to congregate together to laugh, talk, smile, practice, and appreciate being part of the NCBE family while experiencing and expressing our love of dance.

NCBE's Nutcracker productions have been a constant event for North Country families for the last 35 years. We have been blessed that our current Artistic Director, Alice Schonbek has been a major part of this history. Please find attached a letter Ms. Schonbek wrote to all of you concerning this unfortunate situation.

Please stay safe and use the precautions that are being recommended. Keep practicing and dreaming of future roles. We will be back and need all of you to return with us.

Regards,

Adam

Dear NCBE Nutcracker Families,

It is with a heavy heart that I need to inform you that the North Country Ballet Ensemble fall 2020 Nutcracker season has been cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Coming to this necessary decision has been very painful for me and I'm sure for the Board as well. We're taking this difficult action so as to protect the health and well-being of our dancers, crew, staff and audience members. This consideration must take precedence over everything else. As the advice of medical professionals makes clear, it's not possible to foresee a situation in the timeline of the show in which it would be safe for large groups of people to gather in a theater or for dancers to interact in close quarters both off and on stage.

As all of you know, The Nutcracker has a unique set of concerns with regard to social distancing because of the number of people involved. The student dancers, adults, professionals and crew number close to 90. Staying safe, healthy and socially distant, especially in the large scenes, is just not possible. With students auditioning in September and us looking at the challenges of implementing safety precautions likely to still be in place in early fall, it would be difficult to rehearse and be ready. In addition, there are numerous technical challenges in both theatres to mounting a performance in the environment that is likely to prevail in the fall. As a result of all of these considerations, it became apparent to me and our board of directors that there is no path to a safe and viable 2020 Nutcracker season.

With your support we will come back stronger than ever to hold our 35th Anniversary performances in the fall of 2021. I thank you for your understanding as we work through these challenging times.

Alice Schonbek