



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

These young dancers provide a sweet holiday touch to a party scene from "The Nutcracker Ballet," which will be performed by Yankton's Dakota Dance Association at the YHS/Summit Activities Center theatre Nov. 28-30.

Nutcracker

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Timara (Massey). It takes all of us really making this a priority to accomplish what we do."

Dannenbring said that even though she has choreographed a number of the performances of "Nutcracker," each one is unique.

"We always drive to get better," she said. "I like to adjust my choreography to the ability of the dancer. So, as much talent as we get, the choreography always changes."

She added that the talent available is a reflection of community members and how they support each other.

"I believe every person has the talent, I think we just choose what to do with it," Dannenbring said. "What I have always loved about Yankton is we are so family oriented and dedicated to our generations. The town and family support makes this production successful. Without their support, we wouldn't be able to be here."

Director Linda Haar agrees. "All the backstage people working are the unsung heroes," she said. "Whether they are building props or making costumes. How about the folks that take care of our own homes that allow us to be here? I think there are a lot of facets to this that people don't see."

Haar said Dakota Dance Association's organization has also made her life easier.

"(This production) is Dakota Dance's baby," she said. "They organize things down to the finest detail. They have a strong artistic view of what should happen and how to make it happen. I think it is a real gift to the Yankton area — not just the Yankton community but to the entire area — to bring this beautiful artwork and experience to the holiday plate."

"It is such an extravagant program with so many involved," Haar added. "Each dance character group has a dance mom or dance dad in charge. That parent helps to organize and communicate messages to everybody. So, it really is a slick operation in that regard."

Both Haar and Dannenbring said they have truly enjoyed working with each other and that their relationship works for bringing this show to fruition.

"One of my big questions when I came to this two years ago was how I would be able to use my theatre background to direct a dance show," Haar said. "Of course, Dorota is a pro at this and she helped guide me through that and the particular things in terms of staging and meshing that together with the dance. ... I think our work styles and expectations are very similar, so we are very compatible in that regard. There is a lot of crossover — attention to detail, connectedness, staying in character. What little bit of movement background I have with my theatre training complements what she is doing with the choreography. They really do overlap. We both like the idea of layering visual things so there is more than one thing going on, and I think we are very comfortable with that."

Both women stressed the production is for the dancers.

"Our leads are wonderful, disciplined dancers," Dannenbring said. "They are also very kind, loving and hardworking. We are very happy for them that they have the chance to be recognized for the quality of their dance, but also for their loving personalities that are shining through their characters."

Dannenbring also commented on what it is like for the youngest dancers to get to work with the juniors and seniors who are dancing their last "Nutcracker."

"It really inspires our younger dancers to get to work with our older dancers in the production," she said. "I asked to have younger dancers in the production — this year, we have first graders in the production — and I am so glad that Dakota Dance followed that, because we have so many wonderful little girls who can dance on their own and are doing a wonderful job. I think the audience will notice how excited and talented they are."

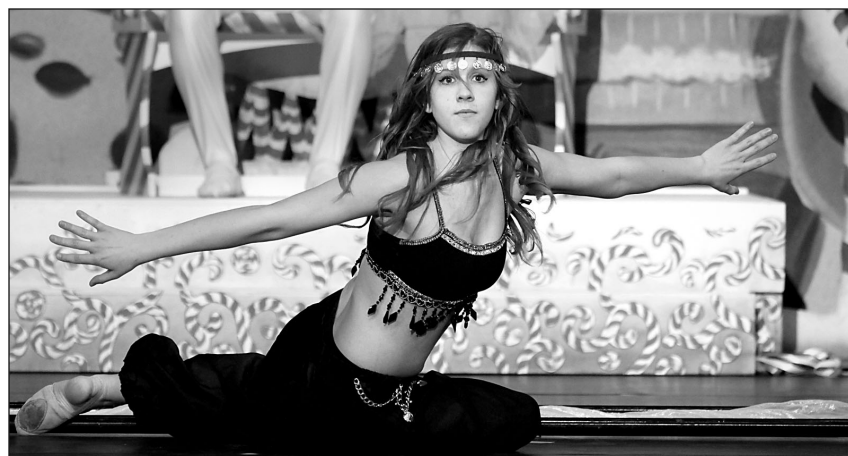
Haar added, "There is a big learning curve because the younger girls watch the older girls and know that they are going to grow into those roles. So they are very motivated to pay attention and do well."

Both women said they do not have a favorite part of the ballet, that they enjoy the entire performance.

"I am looking forward to seeing the whole thing come together and the audience's reaction," Haar said. "Also, I can't wait to see the reactions of the very young performers who are doing this for the very first time."

Also in common are the family connections both women have in the show. Haar's niece is one of the youngest dancers, and each of Dannenbring's Yankton family members are in the cast. However, she noted a special connection with son John.

"My son, John, is one of the leads — the nutcracker prince," Dannenbring said. "He was born 18 years ago in the middle of 'Nutcracker' rehearsals. He is my 'Nutcracker' baby. He is saying goodbye as



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ABOVE: Jessica Kotschegarow dances the Arabian Lead in the Dakota Dance Association's "Nutcracker Ballet." BELOW: Dancers were up in arms — in a good way — while rehearsing this week for their "Nutcracker" performance next weekend. To see or purchase images from this week's rehearsal, visit spotted.yankton.net/.



this is his last. We have five children, a new wife and my husband all involved — this became very special for me."

Haar added another connection has also been a highlight of the production for her.

"I am looking forward and am thrilled that two of the new costumes that are hitting the stage are designed and built by a former student of mine, Travis Hallsey," she said. "I am very excited and get a bit teary. I remember his first stab at costuming 'Oklahoma!' at the playhouse here in town when he came over to deliver a prop for me."

When asked if they are ready for the show to begin, Dannenbring said there is no doubt they are ready for the curtain to go up.

"We are so ready, we are more than ready — we were ready to open last week," she said. "But that is what we like to do. We are always so very ready. In case of emergencies we are ready to go. We are just hoping for good audiences and wonderful weather."

Tickets are available for purchase at the Yankton Mall, 2101 Broadway, next to the JC Penney entrance. Hours of sale are

- Saturday and Sunday: 1 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
- Monday through Friday: 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 28 — 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

CAST LIST

CLARA: Elle Hiltunen (Friday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m.) and Paige Golden (Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.)

SNOW QUEEN: Elizabeth Pearson
LEAD ANGEL: Elisabeth Rettig
BALLERINA DOLL: Callie Pospishil
MYSTERY DOLL: Alicia Gregoire
SHEPHERDESS LEAD: Abigail Cuka
ARABIAN LEAD: Jessica Kotschegarow

CHINESE LEAD: Cheree Becvar
DEW DROP: Johanna Lippert
SUGAR PLUM FAIRY: Rachel Frick
NUTCRACKER PRINCE: John Dannenbring

SNOW CRYSTAL: McKenna Golden
WINTER FAIRY: Leah Waid
MOUSE KING: Belle Heine
CLOWN DOLL: Alleysia Ugofsky
SPANISH LEAD: Kirsten May
RUSSIAN LEAD: Paige Golden (Friday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m.) and Elle Hiltunen (Saturday 7:30 p.m. and Sunday 2 p.m.)

STEP MOTHER MAID: Sophie Kouri
STEP SISTER MAIDS: Kolbi Kennedy and Tia Vlasman

PARTY SCENE: Savannah Frick, Piper Mikkelsen, Emily Novak, Maddie Smith, Lilianna Dannenbring, Paige Hoising, Lilly Johnson, Lexi Saunders, Conner Chambers, Gabriel Dannenbring, Matt Fitzgerald, Jace Guthmiller, Dylan Kortan, Jared Rafferty, Jacob Rettig, Jacob McBride, Brennan Pipes and Christian Rettig.

ADULT PARTY GUESTS: Ty and Ashley Dannenbring, Brian and Pam Hamberger, Jerold and Stacy Ryken

JUDGE STAHLBAUM & WIFE: Chris and Brooke Schloss

HERR DROSSELMEIER: David Dannenbring

MICE: Ariel Bender, Jayci Ellis, Elle Feser, Mya Gilbertson, Emma Hamberger, Frannie Kouri, Ellie Novak, Vada Novak, Willow Reese, Daryan Stoebner, Sara

Strom, Paris Walter, Isabelle Wintz
CINDERELLA MAID: Samantha Kanaly

SOLDIERS: Erick Buechler, Julia Buechler, Mia Crandall, Lance Dannenbring, Cayden Ellis, Paige Hatch, Makenzie Medeck, Abe O'Brien, Hudson Rettig, Rockford Rettig, Zayne Schramm, Clay Stastny, Briannika Sutura

RUSSIAN GREETERS: Shelby Gilbert, Jazmin Hill, Cecilia Kouri, Claire Kouri, Elsie Larson, Rose LeFebvre, Katie Szczesney, Gracie Thurman

ICE FAIRIES: Haylee Heinemeyer, Shanna Hill, Kyra Liebig

WHITE ANGELS: Brooke Anderson, Shae Hanson, Thea Luken, Bergen O'Brien, Hannah Rettig, Halle Stephenson, Lauren Tereshinski

BLUE ANGELS: Ivie Galvan, Eleanor Johnson, Kyndle Kennedy, Alexis Klimek, Grace Pavlish, Claire Rembold, Willa Reimler, Victoria Rettig, Madison Ryken, Jaelyn Saunders, Katie Schulte, Claire Tereshinski

SNOWFLAKES 1: Kylie Briest, Brynlyn Hamberger, Morgan Heine, Grace Liebig, Abby Newman, Allie Rembold, Lainey Renken, Leona Stastny

SNOWFLAKES 2: Brenna Becker, Kellie Geigle, Lauren Hill, Haley Larson, Olivia Liebig, Piper Mikkelsen, Holly Medeck, Accalia Nelson, Emily Novak, Catherine Perakslis, Kaycee Smith, Tia Vlasman

HARP ANGELS: Lillian Bell, Ava Brandt, Kloe Gall, Elle Guthmiller, Claire Mooney, Macy Schramm, Sarah Swier, Emily Wieseler

SUGAR & SPICE: Kelsie Faulk, Annika Granaas, Olivia Granaas, Megan Highland, Bergen O'Brien

CANDY CANES: Kaylin Crisman, Taeya Kennedy, Joselyn Pearson, Paige Reese, Anastasia Sternhagen, Olivia Wintz

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SHEPHERDESS: Haylee Heinemeyer, Shanna Hill, Kolbi Kennedy, Kyra Liebig, Olivia Liebig, Catherine Perakslis, Elisabeth Rettig, Maddie Smith

CHINESE TEA: Abigail Cuka, Belle Heine, Samantha, Kanaly Kolbi, Kennedy, Sophie Kouri, Kyra Liebig, Emily Novak, Leah Waid

YOUNGER MOTHER GINGER: Lillian Bell, Annika Granaas, Emma Hamberger, Thea Luken, Claire Mooney, Abby Newman, Ellie Novak, Willow Reese, Lainey Renken, Hannah Rettig, Brooklynn Wintz

SHEEP: Jordyn Cunningham, Ava Gilbertson, Emma Herrboldt, Isabella Koerner, Sarah Liebig, Aubrie Lloyd, Noelle Nockels, Elizabeth Novak, Madeline Payer, Isabella Sutura, Madeline Wintz

BLACK SHEEP: Connor Perakslis
OLDER MOTHER GINGER: Kylie Briest, Lilianna Dannenbring, Kelsie Faulk, Kellie Geigle, Olivia Granaas, Morgan Heine, Lauren Hill, Paige Hoising, Olivia Liebig, Holly Medeck, Kaycee Smith

RUSSIAN PEPPERMINT: Savannah Frick, Kellie Geigle, Brynlyn Hamberger, Megan Highland, Cecilia Kouri, Claire Kouri, Haley Larson, Rose LeFebvre, Piper Mikkelsen, Accalia Nelson, Lexi Saunders, Tia Vlasman

WALTZ OF FLOWERS: Cheree Becvar, Abigail Cuka, Rachel Frick, Savannah Frick, McKenna Golden, Paige Golden, Belle Heine, Elle Hiltunen, Samantha Kanaly, Johanna Lippert, Kirsten May, Elisabeth Rettig, Elizabeth Pearson, Leah Waid

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