BALLET NORTHWEST

Nutcracker

Cast

Handbook

2026-27

Ballet Northwest Contacts

Artistic Directors
Ken and Josie Johnson directors@balletnorthwest.org

Ballet Northwest Staff
Org Support, Business Management: info@balletnorthwest.org
(this is the email to use for BNW financial business.)

"The Barre" Parent Volunteer Group Coordinators
Natalee Andrews, Becky Carrell, Brittiny Considine, Sarah Furtick:
bnwvolunteers@gmail.com

General Information
Website: www.balletnorthwest.org; Facebook: www.facebook.com/balletnorthwest
Mailing Address: PO Box 2888, Olympia, WA 98507
Business Office Voicemail: 360-867-8824 (non-Artistic matters)
Studio Phone: 360-943-8011 (Artistic Directors/Studio Phone)

Emergency Absences – The dancer or guardian should email directors@balletnorthwest.org before rehearsal call time. Ken and Josie access their email regularly. Non-Emergency absences must be approved using a Rehearsal Excuse Form two weeks ahead of time

About Ballet Northwest
Ballet Northwest is a non-profit, community organization dedicated to the performing art of dance. Ballet Northwest is committed to:

- Producing high-quality performances featuring a large number of local dancers.
- Providing opportunities for local dancers to meet and learn from teachers of diverse professional backgrounds.
- Offering educational arts experiences for performers and patrons.
- Promoting the art of dance in Southwest Washington.
- Recognizing that racial and cultural diversity enrich our organization and enhance the quality of our performances. We strive to include dancers and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and ensure that all participants are given equal opportunities for success.

Welcome to the Cast!
Being in the cast of *The Nutcracker* requires a considerable amount of time and energy during the school year – not only for the dancers but for their families, as well. We sincerely thank you for being a part of the Ballet Northwest's 2026 production of *The Nutcracker*.

The time, energy and financial commitments required for all Cast are thoroughly detailed in the Handbook. Please thoroughly read all the materials and seriously consider these commitments. If you have auditioned for a role but wish to withdraw from the casting process, please email directors@balletnorthwest.org. before noon on Wednesday, September 30 to inform the Artistic Directors of this change.

What is the Community Cast?
The Community Cast is a large group of enthusiastic dancers, ages eight (by August 31, 2026) and older, who have been cast for Ballet Northwest's annual production of *The Nutcracker*. The

Community Cast participation fee is $215, which includes rehearsal and performance time and use of Ballet Northwest costumes for the role in which they have been cast.

Traditional Community Cast roles include, but are not limited to: Mice, Infantry, Cavalry, Captains, Toys, Servants, Angels, Cotton Candy, Mother Ginger, Mother G's Children, Party Parents, Party Children, etc. Available roles may vary from year to year due to a wide variety of factors.

What is the Company Cast?
The Company Cast is a committed group of dancers, age twelve (by August 31, 2026) and older, who perform at an Intermediate or Advanced Technique level and take a minimum of two Ballet Technique classes per week at any dance school, and have successfully auditioned to perform in Ballet Northwest's Dance Company. The Company Participation Fee is $525 per dancer, which includes rehearsal and performance time and use of Ballet Northwest costumes for the role in which they have been cast. Company dancers also receive weekly mandatory company classes (usually on Saturday afternoons) plus regular master classes and educational seminars with guest teachers. Company dancers have the added commitment of rehearsing for and performing in Ballet Northwest's spring production in May. Company dancers have the option of dancing and/or choreographing for the Young Choreographers Showcase in August. Select company dancers are asked to participate in dance festivals in February & March. Company dancers also are eligible to apply for scholarships for summer training and college. ALL COMPANY DANCERS MUST TRAIN FOR AT LEAST 20 HOURS DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR COMPANY THE FOLLOWING YEAR. At this level of dancing, summer training is important to maintain the level strength and stamina to avoid injury and also to continue progressing in their technique.

Communications
BNW Community & Company cast will utilize the "BAND" app for most communications with cast families. Please make sure to join (detailed info will be provided at parent meetings.) Note there will be separate groups for community and company cast.

Parent/Dancer Etiquette & Expectations
Ballet Northwest prides itself on fostering a positive environment for all dancers and families. It is important that all dancers and parents are respectful and courteous to other dancers and parents. Gossiping, bullying, and negativity in person and on social media are not tolerated and could be cause for dismissal. It is important when casting is posted for all dancers and parents to be sensitive to other dancers and parents, be respectful of casting decisions, and keep an open mind as groupings, choreography, costumes and dances can vary year to year. All dancers are valued, challenged, and placed in a role appropriate for their ability and experience. We encourage parents to be supportive of their dancer and other dancers and help foster a positive environment. Ballet Northwest is a unique and special place where dancers of all interests and abilities are given wonderful opportunities to perform on a beautiful stage with high quality costumes and sets. Issues should be reported to the Directors immediately.

Nutcracker Performance Requirements
All cast members must be able to dance in ALL performances of *The Nutcracker* on December 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, and 20 in both matinee and evening shows. Attendance is required at all rehearsals and warm-ups, including the Sunday after Thanksgiving, November 29.

Spring Performance Requirements-COMPANY CAST ONLY
All Company Cast members also perform in *Don Quixote* on May 7, 8, and 9, 2027. Attendance is required at all rehearsals and warm-ups. BNW will not have rehearsals from April 3-10. All dancers must be available Sunday, April 11 for mandatory rehearsals!

Olympia Dance Festival Requirements-INVITED COMPANY CAST ONLY
Some Company Cast members may be invited to participate in dance festivals on February 27, and on weekends in March. These rehearsals will be held January-March, 2027.

Company Class and Master Class Requirements-COMPANY ONLY
Company Cast members are required to attend weekly Company classes Saturday or Sunday afternoons taught by BNW Artistic Directors Ken and Josie Johnson at the Olympia Dance Center. Ballet Northwest also provides Master Classes designed to give our dancers the opportunity to learn from other instructors and expand their dance experience. Attendance and full participation at Master classes is required unless excused. Dancers are required to give Ken or Josie Johnson or Mary Johansen a Rehearsal Excuse Form IN PERSON at least two weeks prior to an absence to be excused. Do NOT put Excuse Forms in the BNW Drop Box.

Casting
Casting is determined by the BNW Artistic Directors based on each dancer's ability, as well as the types of roles and costumes available. BNW is committed to matching as many Cast Members as possible with appropriate roles. *The Nutcracker* Cast List will be posted by midnight on Thursday, October 1, electronically at balletnorthwest.org. Do NOT call or email to find out your role!

Once the Cast List for *The Nutcracker* is posted, it is final. Any dancer who drops out of the Cast AFTER the Cast List is posted may be excluded from future participation in Ballet Northwest. Exceptions may be made for medical reasons or for exceptional circumstances but must be approved by the BNW Artistic Directors.

Mandatory Parent Volunteer Training & Meeting
Parents will be required to attend parent volunteer trainings and/or meetings.

Participation Fee
Every cast member pays a participation fee of $215 (Community Cast) or $545 (Company Cast) due with their audition application. Payment plans are available. If a dancer auditions for the Company but is placed in the Community Cast, a refund for the difference will be issued. If a dancer auditions for Community Cast but is not chosen for the cast, a full refund will be issued.

Family Discount
A discount is given to families with multiple dancers in any combination of company or community cast. Refer to the dancer application for information related to the discount.

Partial Fee Waivers
In case of financial hardship, a limited number of partial fee waivers are available (apply on the audition application.) Fee waiver requests are reviewed by the BNW Board of Directors and are awarded based on demonstrated need. All requests are kept confidential. Applicants will be notified of award upon approval.

Rehearsals
Cast Members will rehearse one or two times each week from Saturday, October 3 through Saturday, December 5. All rehearsals during this time period will be held at Olympia Dance Center.

Rehearsals will be held on Saturdays and/or Sundays until tech week. Cast members are required to attend all of their designated rehearsals. Rehearsal schedules will be posted on Friday evenings electronically at www.balletnorthwest.org under the "Cast and Company" section. Community Cast dancers are expected to arrive 5 minutes early to warm up, and Company Cast dancers are expected to arrive 20 minutes early to warm up and review choreography. Students must not be late to rehearsal without a pre-approved Rehearsal Excuse Form. Any dancer picked up more than 10 minutes after their scheduled rehearsal end time may be assessed a late pick-up fee of $15. Repeated late pick-ups may result in additional consequences, including the possibility of being unable to participate in future rehearsals or performances.

There will be no rehearsals Wednesday through Saturday, November 25-28. However, all dancers are required to attend rehearsal on Sunday, November 29 – less than two weeks from opening night!

Community Cast full evening rehearsals will be held December 6, 7, 9, and 10 at the Washington Center for the Performing Arts. Company Cast will attend all of those full evening rehearsals plus December 8 and 17. Please be prepared to pick up your dancer at the expected rehearsal end time, but be patient with the nature of final dress rehearsals as they may go longer.

Rehearsal Excuse Forms
If a dancer must be absent from rehearsal for a major event (i.e. family wedding, band concert), a Rehearsal Excuse Form must be completed and handed directly to Ken or Josie Johnson or Mary Johansen for their approval at least two weeks prior to an absence. Ken or Josie's signature is required for your absence to be excused. This must be done in addition to the absences reported on the audition form. Rehearsal Excuse Forms may NOT be mailed, may NOT be placed in the BNW Drop Box, or may NOT be delivered in any other mode than IN PERSON to Ken and Josie Johnson or Mary Johansen. Rehearsal excuses will not be granted starting Friday, November 20.

Sickness and Emergencies
If a dancer is sick or has an emergency, the guardian or adult cast member MUST EMAIL Ken and Josie at directors@balletnorthwest.org before rehearsal call time.

Theater Load-In Day
Starting Sunday, December 6, all rehearsals will take place in the Washington Center for the Performing Arts. This is also the day that BNW Volunteers will move all of the sets into the theater. There will be evening dress rehearsals every night that week, but Community Cast Members are excused on Tuesday night (Tech Night) **December 8** to allow for additional work on the theater lighting and sound. Company Cast are required to attend that evening.

Theater Dressing Rooms
Community Cast Members are assigned to dressing areas either in or near the Black Box or rooms located near the Green Room downstairs. Dancers are expected to follow all rules and respect BNW leadership and volunteer staff. Dancers must cooperate in keeping their dressing room space tidy and safe. The dressing rooms for Community Cast are generally assigned as follows:

Community Cast Black Box Area: Mice, Infantry, Cavalry, Captains, Toys, Servants, Angels, Cotton Candy, Mother Ginger, Mother G's Children, Party Parents, etc.

Community Cast Downstairs Rooms: Male Party Parents.

What to Bring
Community Cast Members may bring toys, games, books and other quiet activities to pass the time. It can feel like a long waiting period between call time and performance time, so please help support your child by providing simple, enjoyable things to do. Finally, we ask that dancers bring a cooperative spirit, an attitude of respect for their volunteer supervisors, and a desire to perform their best – both on and off stage.

Please carefully consider the personal items your dancer brings to and/or leaves at the Washington Center. Neither the theater nor BNW is responsible for the loss or theft of valuables.

What Not to Bring
No gum, candy, drinks or food are allowed in the dressing rooms at any time. Please do not bring valuables. BNW is not responsible for any items damaged or lost. Please ensure that your dancer understands their responsibility in safeguarding their possessions. Cell phones are permitted only to contact parent/guardian. BNW reserves full authority in monitoring the use of cell phones while dancers are under our supervision. Other electronics are NOT PERMITTED.

Company Cast Members are assigned to dressing rooms off of the Green Room on the bottom floor of the Washington Center. Dancers are expected to follow all rules and respect BNW leadership and volunteer staff. Dancers must cooperate in keeping their dressing room space tidy and safe. No food or drink is allowed in dressing rooms.

Final Two Dress Rehearsals
Final Dress Rehearsals are Wednesday, December 9 and Thursday, December 10. Full make-up and costumes are required during BOTH final dress rehearsals as photographers will be present.

Performances
Dancers are expected to be on time to all performances. Community and Company Cast members are considered to be on time when they sign in at the theater by the required **CALL TIME (this is when you should arrive**.) Late arrivals will be addressed by the BNW Artistic Directors, and chronic tardiness may result in dismissal.

There are a total of eight *Nutcracker* performances over two weekends. Performance weekends include one Friday (evening), two Saturday performances (matinee and evening), and one Sunday (matinee) performance. Performance dates are: December 11, 12, 13, and December 18, 19, 20.

Required Performance Check-In and Check-Out
We are committed to ensuring the safety of all of our dancers, no matter their age. For this reason, we require all Community Cast parents and Company Cast dancers check-in upon arrival at the theater and check-out **after every performance. All dancers will enter/exit through the Black Box lobby on Washington Street (not the backstage alley.) For safety reasons, do not drop dancers outside of the theater, WALK THEM INTO THE BLACK BOX LOBBY.** Parents are encouraged to clearly communicate with their children about who will be picking them up after every performance to help ensure their safety and well-being. Please be on time for pick-up after all performances. After each performance, all dancers may be excused when:
*They have carefully removed all costumes and accessories
*They or a BNW Volunteer has properly stored the complete costume (including personal property such as shoes and leotards that are considered part of their costume, if applicable)
*They have neatly gathered and stowed their personal belongings for use during the performance
*They have collected their coats, hats, scarves, bags, cosmetic kits, cell phones, etc.

Performers as Audience Members
If a dancer is checked out after Act I and plans to attend Act II as an audience member, **ALL TRACES** of stage make-up must be removed before entering the theater lobby. Parents checking out dancers after the Act I curtain call to attend Act II may enter and exit through the Black Box Theater access by the elevator in the lobby, but only if prior arrangements have been made with the Black Box or Theater Access security volunteer. A valid ticket for your dancer is required for entry to the theater – even when entering at Intermission.

Costumes and Accessories
Each dancer must provide their own ballet shoes, leotards and tights in colors and styles as needed for the show. All costumes and costume accessories not provided by the dancer are the property of Ballet Northwest and must be returned in good condition at the end of the production. Any items you purchase for performances will, of course, remain your property.

An extensive list will be posted in early November, allowing plenty of time to order at least two pairs of tights and the right color shoes.

We will be scheduling costume fittings for all groups in the next few weeks. At that time, we will further discuss their costumes, tights, shoes and accessories. You do not need to run out and buy anything until you feel certain about what is required.

Depending on the dancer's role, they will change into their costume at a designated time. Once the dancer is in their costume the following rules apply:

*No food or drink may be consumed in costume.
*Extreme caution must be used in applying or touching make-up. (Dancers may bring loose fitting button-up shirt to protect their clothing during the make-up application.)
*A skin tone leotard should be worn under the costume unless otherwise directed.
*Absolutely no sitting down in costume.
*Dancers must wait calmly and quietly to enter the backstage area.
*Dancers must be respectful of their costume until it is removed and safely stored.

Costume fittings will appear on the rehearsal schedule, so please take notice of your dancer's fitting times. Rehearsal schedules will be posted in hard copy each Friday on the BNW board at the rehearsal studio and online 24/7 at balletnorthwest.org under "Cast and Company" section.

"The Barre" Parent Volunteer Group
As a small non-profit community organization, BNW doesn't have a massive staff paid to make a major production "magically" happen. It requires lots and lots of hard-working volunteers like you. Having a well-organized volunteer program is the secret to success at BNW…and that's where the Barre lends extra support!

The Barre Leadership
Natalee Andrews, Becky Carrell, Brittiny Considine, and Sarah Furtick are the Volunteer Coordinators. Please feel free to contact them at bnwvolunteers@gmail.com. They will be happy to assist you and look forward to working with you this season.

The Barre Parent Volunteer Group provides support for Ballet Northwest dancers through exceptional adult volunteers. If you are an adult family member of a Ballet Northwest dancer, you are automatically a member of *The Barre.*

The following volunteer opportunities describe all the ways you can help create the highest quality performance experience for your dancers. The Barre also serves to help volunteers feel more supported, trained, educated, and empowered which, in turn, helps everyone more fully enjoy the volunteer process—beginning to end.

Family Volunteer Service
A production of this magnitude and quality requires the countless gifts and talents of many individuals. ***Adult family members of all Community Cast and Company Members are required to complete four to five volunteer activities per family during The Nutcracker (requirement will be solidified after casting is finalized.)*** It is our ultimate goal to match your skills, talents, and personality with a job that you'll be able to successfully carry out. There are many ways for you to fulfill your commitment while supporting the work of Ballet Northwest.

And remember, Family Service Hours can be shared among all adults in your family: parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, and siblings **ages 18 and older** can help fulfill your volunteer commitment of five activities. In addition, all family members who volunteer must submit and pass the **background investigation** before being permitted to volunteer for the safety of all dancers. We simply ask that you help us determine whether they are a good fit for a specific role and that they are able to successfully carry out their duties on your behalf.

Volunteer Sign-Up
Sign-ups for all available volunteer positions will be posted and managed online through SignUpGenius at www.balletnorthwest.org (under the Get Involved: Volunteer tab.) Look for an email later this fall with instructions on how to register and use the online system. We encourage you to sign up once you receive the email notice to have top priority and first choice to all volunteer options. Then regularly check back with SignUpGenius to see if other volunteer opportunities are available for you and your family to assist with. Each volunteer will need to identify which dancer they are volunteering on behalf of when signing up online.

Pre-Production Volunteer Opportunities

Production Support Coordinator (fundraising, general support lead, fulfills all shifts)
- Coordinate dancer fundraiser item distribution (coffee, wreaths, etc.)
- Coordinate Nutcracker and spring show apparel distribution.
- Coordinate distribution of Nutcracker and spring show prepaid flower bouquets.
- Coordinate poster distribution.
- Help ID new fundraising opportunities in the community.

Hospitality Lead / Coordinator (fulfills all shifts)
- Pick up pizza, water for Nutcracker and spring show load-in/out.
- Pick up catered food/bev and supervise Nutcracker and spring show cast parties.
- Arrange hospitality for guest artists.
- Coordinate hospitality for other events as needed.

Fundraising Committee (shift fulfillment dependent on level of participation from volunteer)
- Procure raffle items.
- Procure online auction items.
- Solicit sponsorships.
- Solicit advertisements.
- Solicit Annual Fund donations.

Nutcracker Black Box Volunteer Leads (fulfills all shifts)

- Coordinates Black Box and volunteer needs with Directors and Barre Leads.

Barre Volunteer Leads (fulfills all shifts)

- Meets regularly throughout year with Directors and Black Box leads to reflect/coordinate volunteer needs for Nutcracker and spring shows.
- Present at Nutcracker and spring show auditions.
- Creates/updates company and community cast email lists.
- Assist in Parent Meetings (community and company.)
- Regular check-ins with Hospitality and Production Support leads.
- Sets up / maintains Signup Genius for Nutcracker and spring shows.
- Timely response to volunteer needs/questions throughout tech and shows.
- Communicate with BNW board re: background checks.
- 2 leads present at WCPA for every tech/dress rehearsal and show.
- Background check required.

Company Dancer Bios Manager: Compile & edit 65 company dancer bios in a Word or Google document and send to directors by mid-November. (= 1 shift)

Community Cast Gift Bag Assembler: Shop for gift bags, have labels printed, receive ornaments from Michelle, assemble bags, and deliver to WA Center by opening weekend. Reimbursement provided; contact Barre volunteer coordinators for details. (=2 shifts)

Bear-Zaar-Boutique Sales: Meet at Olympia High to assist BNW merchandise sales. (=1 shift)

<u>Production Volunteer Opportunities</u>

Load Sets @ All Ready Moving Warehouse: Trucks with enclosed trailers helpful but not required. Meet at Rich Road shop. (=1 shift)

Load-In Sets @ WCPA: Must stay the entire time and sign in/out. (=2 shifts)

Boutique Set Up / Tear Down: Pre-arranged with Barre volunteer coordinators.

Cast Entry Outside Security: Outside Security volunteer stays outside the new cast entrance to help direct cast call time lines away from patron entrance and coordinates with Inside Security volunteer as parents arrive to pick up dancers. Security only allows dancers and volunteers to enter and ensures families wait outside. Background check required. (=1 shift)

Cast Sign-In/Out Table: Arrives 10 minutes prior to company call time to be in place for dancer arrival. Assists Barre volunteer coordinators and Directors with identifying dancers and volunteers who are not present at their call time. Background check required. (=1 shift)

Black Box Floaters: Coordinates with Black Box Leads to identify an area/job they will be responsible for prior, during, and after performance. Floaters may be responsible for specific stations inside the Black Box or the cast entrance lobby. Floaters assigned to the cast entrance lobby will serve as runners who, as performances conclude, coordinate with the security volunteers to connect families with dancers for pick up. Female only, background check required. (=1 shift)

Black Box Sewer: Pre-approval required before signing up. Contact Barre volunteer coordinators if interested. Female only, background check required. (=1 shift)

Company Downstairs Sewer: Pre-approval required before signing up. Contact Barre volunteer coordinators if interested. Female only, background check required. (=1 shift)

Dry Ice Runner: ***Must do all 3 days*** Make trips to Linde Gas & Equipment on Black Lake Boulevard to pick up dry ice on Dec. 10, 12, 19. Must be able to lift ice chest full of dry ice. (=3 shifts)

Black Box Make-Up: Work with Black Box Leads to apply and assist company cast dancers with make-up requirements. Female only, background check required. (=1 shift)

Boutique Sales - Lobby: Assist Boutique lead with sales before/after show and during intermissions. Background check required. (=1 shift)

Boutique Sales - Satellite Table Upstairs: Coordinate with Boutique lead for sales before/after show and during intermissions. Background check required. (=1 shift)

Online Auction Promotion: Promote BNW's online auction before/after show and during intermissions. Background check required. (=1 shift)

Costume Organization/Storage: Immediately following final performance, assist Costume Lead with organizing costumes for return to the costume shop. Background check required. (=1 shift)

Black Box Takedown: Assist Black Box leads with takedown of materials and tables until dismissed. Background check required. (=1 shift)

Load Out Sets: Assist in loading sets out of the WCPA onto trucks and delivering to storage units. Must sign in/out. (=2 shifts)

Launder Black Box Tablecloths: Pickup tablecloths immediately following final Nutcracker performance to clean and return to the Olympia Dance Center by the end of the month. (1 shift)

Other Ways to Support BNW…. Ballet Northwest Annual Fund
Ballet Northwest is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization funded by ticket sales, grants, corporate sponsorships, and donations from groups and individuals.

We encourage all families and supporters of Ballet Northwest to make a tax-deductible financial gift to the organization. Each donor determines the amount they can give. No gift is too small, although some gift levels do come with added benefits. All BNW donors receive priority access to premium seats. Feel free to make a donation at www.balletnorthwest.org. Gifts may be made in monthly or quarterly payments, if needed. We are grateful for your support of dance in our community.

We also ask that you share our Annual Fund information on www.balletnorthwest.org with grandparents, friends, and business associates! Thank you for your efforts in strengthening our community arts organization.

Wishing you a wonderful Nutcracker season!
With gratitude from the Board, Artistic Directors and Leadership of Ballet Northwest