

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Leslie Rivers

O: 414-902-2102/C: 414-510-0052

[lrivers@milwaukeeballet.org](mailto:lrivers@milwaukeeballet.org)



***The Nutcracker is the gift that keeps giving***

*- Milwaukee's magical holiday tradition returns to brighten the holiday season -*

**MILWAUKEE – Dec. 6, 2016** - Milwaukee Ballet's *The Nutcracker* rings in the holiday season this Saturday with Tchaikovsky's sumptuous score and Artistic Director Michael Pink's enchanting choreography.

This festive classic, onstage Dec. 10-27 at Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, has been a staple of Wisconsin's holiday celebrations for more than 40 years. Artistic Director Michael Pink's interpretation is highly regarded for its lavish production design and creativity.

"*The Nutcracker* invites audiences to let go of the hustle and bustle of their everyday lives and escape into this wonderful story that celebrates everything we love about the holidays," says Michael Pink. "That's why so many people return year after year. They want to make new memories with this time-honored tradition. For many, *The Nutcracker* is the holiday magic they can count on."

*The Nutcracker* is the city's largest holiday spectacle, featuring a cast of more than 200 dancers, including students from Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy, lavish set pieces, period costumes, and special effects. The beauty onstage is enhanced by Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra, who will play Tchaikovsky's signature score in its entirety with a special appearance by the young artists of Milwaukee Children's Choir.

Pink choreographed the classic with plenty of action to keep the audience enchanted whether they are seeing it for the first time, or the fiftieth time. Furthermore, *The Nutcracker* features four casts that change every performance, ensuring the audience sees a different show every time they come to the theater.

As the holidays are a time to come together, Milwaukee Ballet invited groups from local arts organizations to perform before the show, including Milwaukee Children's Choir and Latino Arts String Program, as well as visits from Milwaukee Art Museum's Kohl's Color Wheel and Santa Claus.

Milwaukee's favorite mascots, Bango (Milwaukee Bucks), Hank the Ballpark Pup (Milwaukee Brewers), Roscoe (Milwaukee Admirals), and Hubert the Lion (BMO Harris Bank) will also make guest appearances in the production.

Pictures with Milwaukee Ballet dancers are available in the Marcus Center Atrium after each performance for a suggested donation of \$10. Proceeds benefit Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy.

*The Nutcracker* is a gift to Milwaukee from BMO Harris Bank. This is the fourth year BMO Harris Bank has sponsored the production. *The Nutcracker* is supported by the Joan, Jack, and Victor Stein Foundation. Milwaukee Ballet's 2016-17 Season is presented by Donna and Donald Baumgartner, with operational support from the United Performing Arts Fund.

### **Sensory-Friendly Performance**

Milwaukee Ballet will perform a sensory-friendly version of *The Nutcracker* for the first time in its history for an audience of children and adults diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder or other sensitivity issues. In partnership with **Autism Speaks** and with support from **Marcus Center for the Performing Arts**, this adapted version of *The Nutcracker* will be presented on December 21 at 6pm.

Tickets are available through the Marcus Center at 414-273-7121 ext. 213. Tickets can also be purchased online at [marcuscenter.org/mcaccess](http://marcuscenter.org/mcaccess) using the group code AUTISMSPEAKS.

Patrons with questions about the sensory-friendly elements of the production can call Milwaukee Ballet's Community Engagement Department at (414) 902-2120.

### **Special Appearances**

Earlier this season, Milwaukee Ballet invited mascots from local professional sports teams to audition for a chance to appear in *The Nutcracker*. Bango from the Milwaukee Bucks, Roscoe from the Milwaukee Admirals, and Hank the Ballpark Pup from the Milwaukee Brewers accepted the challenge, along with Hubert the Lion from BMO Harris Bank. Artistic Director Michael Pink invited all four to make an appearance in the production. Their performance schedule is as follows:

**Hubert the Lion** (BMO Harris Bank) – Sunday, Dec. 11, 1:30pm

**Roscoe** (Milwaukee Admirals) – Sunday, Dec. 11, 6pm

**Hank the Ballpark Pup** (Milwaukee Brewers) – Saturday, Dec. 17, 1:30pm

**Bango** (Milwaukee Bucks) – Tuesday, Dec. 27, 1:30pm

### **Family Friendly Pre-Show Activities**

Milwaukee Ballet is happy to host complimentary activities for families to enjoy before select performances:

**Saturday, Dec. 10** at 1:30pm - Art project from Kohl's Color Wheels and music from Milwaukee Children's Choir

**Saturday, Dec. 10** at 7:30pm – Music from Latino Arts String Program

**Sunday, Dec. 11** at 1:30pm – Music from Milwaukee Children's Choir

**Sunday, Dec. 11** at 6pm - Holiday music from students of Barcel Suzuki String Academy

**Saturday, Dec. 17** at 1:30pm – A visit from Santa Claus and music from Milwaukee Children's Choir

**Saturday, Dec. 17** at 1:30pm – A visit from Santa Claus and music from Milwaukee Children’s Choir  
**Sunday, Dec. 18** at 1:30pm – Music from Milwaukee Children’s Choir  
**Sunday, Dec. 18** at 6pm – Music from Milwaukee Children’s Choir  
**Friday, Dec. 23** at 1:30pm – Mini-Ballet class  
**Monday, Dec. 26** at 1:30pm - Mini-Ballet class  
**Monday, Dec. 26** at 6pm - Mini-Ballet class  
**Tuesday, Dec. 27** at 1:30pm - Mini-Ballet class

All activities will take place one hour before the performance time in the Marcus Center atrium. Patrons must have a ticket to the performance to participate.

### **About Milwaukee Ballet**

Founded in 1970, Milwaukee Ballet celebrates its 47<sup>th</sup> season as a staple of Milwaukee’s arts and culture community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Michael Pink, Milwaukee Ballet has become world-renowned for presenting both bold new interpretations of story ballets, and cutting-edge contemporary works. Milwaukee Ballet is the home to an international company of dancers, and is one of only a few companies in the nation to feature its own orchestra. Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy is the only professional dance school in the Midwest accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance. Milwaukee Ballet’s award-winning Community Engagement department serves more than 30,000 people in Southeastern Wisconsin through original, interactive programs. Learn more at [milwaukeeballet.org](http://milwaukeeballet.org).

### **About BMO Harris Bank**

BMO Harris Bank provides a broad range of personal banking products and solutions through more than 600 branches and approximately 1,300 ATMs in Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Arizona and Florida. BMO Harris Bank’s commercial banking team provides a combination of sector expertise, local knowledge and mid-market focus throughout the U.S. For more information about BMO Harris Bank, go to the company [fact sheet](#). Banking products and services are provided by BMO Harris Bank N.A. and are subject to bank or credit approval. BMO Harris Bank® is a trade name used by BMO Harris Bank N.A. Member FDIC. BMO Harris Bank is part of BMO Financial Group, a North American financial organization with approximately 1,600 branches, and CDN \$681 billion in assets (as of April 30, 2016).