



July 2026

Welcome New MPBT *Nutcracker* Dancers and Families,

We are so excited that your dancer is joining MPBT's 2026 production of *The Nutcracker*! We can already feel the magic of the Sugar Plum Fairy dancing in the Kingdom of Sweets and can't wait for your dancer to feel the same!

We understand that participating in a production of this size involves not only the commitment of the dancer but also their parent / guardian (and sometimes a sibling)! We hope this Parent Information Packet answers many of your questions, including dates/times of our Critical (all cast required) rehearsals, and tech week and production schedule the week of December 8-13, 2026. We greatly appreciate you taking a few minutes to review the packet with your dancer. Please email us at info@mpballettheatre.org if you have any questions. And don't forget to bring all questions to the Parent Meeting held while your child auditions!!

Our experienced dancers can't wait to meet our new cast members and find their buddies at our Nutcracker Kick Off Party on Sunday, September 13 from 11:15am-12:15pm. We look forward to getting to know you and your children in the coming months as we make memories together and create a joyful performance that has become a beloved Monterey Peninsula holiday tradition!

With love and appreciation,
Tia Brown
MPBT Founder & Artistic Director



WELCOME TO MPBT'S *THE NUTCRACKER*!!!

December 11-13, 2026
Sunset Center in Carmel, CA

Welcome to MPBT's 2026 The Nutcracker! We ask all families to please carefully review this Parent Information Packet with your dancer to gain a deeper understanding of what occurs during Auditions and what is needed to participate in The Nutcracker. We have also included a 1-page "Key Dates" page at the end of the packet that you can print and put on your refrigerator. It contains all Critical (Required) rehearsals and other fun events. You will be asked to ***acknowledge that you have read the Parent Info Packet in its entirety*** when completing your Audition forms. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask us at info@mpballettheatre.org. **See you at auditions and the parent meeting on Saturday, August 22nd!**

ANSWERS TO SOME GENERAL PARENT QUESTIONS

Does my dancer need to have taken ballet in the past to participate in The Nutcracker?

Not at all! For many beginning dancers, only one weekly ballet class (or weekly dance class that has a solid focus on ballet) is required to participate in The Nutcracker. The number of required classes increases with the complexity of the role. Please refer to the Participation Requirements section of this packet to learn more about class requirements. *MPBT welcomes dancers from studios across Monterey County and beyond. On the Participation form - "Minor Participant Code of Conduct," please indicate your dancer's studio name, teacher, and the ballet class(es) your dancer is taking. Thank you!*

I have reviewed the MPBT calendar of activities (entitled "Key Dates" - located at the end of the Parent Packet) and see a date conflict with a Critical (Required) rehearsal. We really want to participate - what should we do?

Please reach out to info@mpballettheatre.org no later than Friday, August 21, to let us know about any conflicts so that we can work with you in advance. Also, please include all known conflicts on the Audition Form where requested.

My dancer really wants to participate but I am unsure if I can pay the participation fee and/or pay it all at once. What are my options?

MPBT maintains a scholarship fund, with the stated goal that all families who have demonstrated a financial need may be able to participate in MPBT's Nutcracker production. ***The Scholarship***

Monterey Peninsula Ballet Theatre, Corp. Mailing Address: PO Box 253 Carmel CA 93923



Application is due August 12, 2026 by 10pm. The Scholarship Committee will review your application and email decisions prior to auditions. Please email info@mpballettheatre.org to request the scholarship application and/or discuss payment needs.

What if something arises between auditions on August 22 and the September 4 Participation Paperwork deadline, and we can no longer commit?

If a dancer auditions and then is unable to participate prior to signing the Participant Paperwork forms (due Sept. 4), a \$30 audition fee will be collected post auditions. We greatly appreciate payment upon receipt of invoice.

READY TO AUDITION?

We invite **all dancers ages 5-18**, regardless of ballet experience, to audition. (If your dancer has not quite reached 5 at time of audition, please email info@mpballettheatre.org and our Artistic Director will work with you to determine eligibility.) **MPBT places all dancers who audition into roles**, so please be sure you are 100% ready to commit to participate! Please refer to the Participation Requirements section to understand what that commitment entails.

When and where are auditions?

Saturday, August 22, 2026 @ The Dance Center ("TDC"), 26135 Carmel Rancho Blvd, B6, Carmel, CA. *We are so grateful for The Dance Center's generosity in donating their space for MPBT auditions and rehearsals.*

What time will my dancer audition?

Audition time depends on your dancer's ballet level. (*See below for projected audition timeblocks.*) Once your dancer is called into the studio, they will first be measured for their costumes and then move to their audition.

What if I don't know how my child's ballet class fits into the audition levels listed below? Please include your dancer's Studio name, dance teacher and the # of years dancing ballet / pointe on the Audition form and MPBT's Artistic Director will place your dancer in the appropriate audition timeblock.



What do Parents/Guardians do while the dancer auditions?

Parents/Guardians ***attend a required Parent/Guardian Meeting*** during your child’s audition. We will review all the key information you need to know, answer your questions, and allow time for you to sign up for your required Volunteer hours!! (see Volunteer section for details.) *We will hold a parent/guardian meeting during each dancer audition timeslot. You only need to attend once.*

Do I need to arrive in advance of the audition timeslot?

YES! Please arrive up to 30 minutes in advance to check in to confirm MPBT has 1) all your dancer audition paperwork, and 2) all valid email address(es) and cell phone number(s) so that you receive vital Nutcracker updates throughout the season.

What does my child need to wear for auditions?

Your dancer’s **hair** should be in a bun or secured back away from the face.

For **clothing**, the dancer may wear:

Either: white or black fitted t-shirt or fitted tank top *and* black tights or dance pants with ballet shoes

Or: black leotard, pink tights and ballet shoes

For our youngest auditioners (Kinder, Beginning Ballet levels): active dancewear and jazz or contemporary dance shoes are acceptable if your dancer does not own ballet attire / ballet shoes.

<u>Dancer Ballet Level</u>	<u>Check-In Time</u>	<u>Audition Timeblock*</u> <i>(Costume Measurements / Auditions)</i>
Kinder	12pm	12:30-1:30pm
Beginning Ballet	12:30pm	1-2 pm
Level 1 & 1/2	1 pm	1:30-2:30 pm
Level 2, 2/3, AP, 3, 3/4 with no Pointe training or less than 1 year of Pointe training	1:30 pm	2-3:30 pm



Ballet 4-6 (including non-pointe dancers at this ballet experience level) Pointe Group ALL (1+ years of Pointe training)	2:15 pm	2:45-5:00 pm <i>Parents, please note that in addition to the Parent Meeting you will attend, we will also hold a separate information session with your dancers during their audition time block.</i>
Partnering Audition (if applicable)		5:00-5:30 pm

**Please note we may hold your dancer after their scheduled audition time to assess their level with the next group. We will do our best to hold these auditions times firm, but may need to adjust some timing once we understand the levels of students auditioning.*

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS & FEES
(for both dancer(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s))

Below please find the requirements to participate in the Nutcracker. Once roles are assigned, you will be asked to sign all Participation forms. By signing these forms, you and your dancer are confirming you are able to meet requirements below. We appreciate you submitting all requisite Participation forms and Fees no later than Friday, September 4th. Delays in submission may result in your dancer's role being reassigned or removed from the production. Thank you for your support!

KEY PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

1) Participation Paperwork and Fee payments due no later than September 4, 2026.
 Each dancer will be offered two roles, usually one role per Act, although sometimes both of an individual dancer's roles may be in the same Act. Some higher level dancers may be offered three or more roles, depending on production needs at the time of casting. Participation fees (listed below) are tiered based on level of dancer ability and choreographic complexity of the assigned role. Roles requiring more complex choreography and longer rehearsal time (including partnering instruction) carry a higher participation fee. Please see the Participation Fee table below for details.



How do I pay the participation fees? After the cast list is announced, *you will receive an invoice via email/text message* from MPBT that indicates the amount due. You may pay by cash, check made out to “MPBT,” Visa*, or Mastercard*. **Please note that a 2.99% transaction fee will be assessed in addition to the participation fee for Visa and Mastercard payments. Please ensure all payments are made no later than Friday, September 4, 2026.*

What is included in my Participation Fee? Costume rentals, costume & backstage photos during production week at the theater, Kick-off Party & Wrap Party, up to 13 weekends of rehearsals, and Tech Week / dress rehearsals at Sunset Center.

2) Enrollment in Weekly Ballet / Pointe class(es) (as applicable)

Why does my dancer need to take weekly ballet class(es) while participating in The Nutcracker?

MPBT creates a pre-professional ballet experience for our dancers and our audience. Participants must be familiar with ballet technique and vocabulary for a successful production. Weekly Nutcracker rehearsals - focused on choreography, refinement, and combination of roles - only last 30 mins-1 hour, which does not allow time to review/teach ballet basics. MPBT is a dance-studio-neutral nonprofit organization and is not affiliated with any one particular dance studio. Dancers may complete their required classes at the studio of their choice.

Acro/Tap Role: *if a dancer is offered an Acro/Tap role in Nutcracker, a weekly class in the appropriate genre is also required.*

3) Attendance at all Critical (All Cast Required) Rehearsals, including Tech Week and Performances

With a cast of over 110 dancers performing, MPBT stages its rehearsals carefully and with intention. This year, we have one less weekend available for rehearsals due to Labor Day falling later in the calendar. As such, we needed to add one more “Critical” weekend to our calendar (Nov. 14/15). Please see the “Key Dates” page at the end of this packet for all Critical (required) rehearsals, Tech Week, Production, and other MPBT events.

Why are there required costume / choreography weekends the first two weekends in September? Learning the dancer’s part is critical in the first few weeks, to allow time for corrections and refinements prior to roles being combined with each other to create the entire scene. In addition, with a cast of over 110, we need to allow our costumer enough time to



custom fit all the dancers' costumes. We greatly appreciate your attendance during these critical activities in September.

4) Absence policy for non-“Critical” (but still extremely important!) rehearsals: No more than 3 absences per role during remaining weekend rehearsals

More than 3 absences per casting role may result in removal from that role at the discretion of the Artistic Director. The Artistic Director or a member of the Board of Directors will reach out to discuss if issues arise. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide a partial or full refund once rehearsals begin.

- a) **How do I communicate my dancer's absence?** *We understand families have school breaks / family obligations. Please email info@mpballettheatre.org or complete our online absence form found on the MPBT website of an upcoming absence, ideally no less than 1 week prior to a rehearsal. We greatly appreciate your partnership.*
- b) **What happens if my child gets sick or injured? Will my dancer lose their role?** MPBT's Artistic Director will work with each case individually to understand the circumstances and create a safe path forward for the dancer. Communication and partnership is key - please notify MPBT as quickly as possible should your child become sick or get injured, by emailing info@mpballettheatre.org or submitting the online absence form. *If your dancer has a fever or is actively gastrointestinally ill, they should not attend rehearsal.* Again, please email MPBT immediately to let us know about these active symptoms. We want all dancers to be able to participate safely!!

5) Parent/Guardian Volunteer Obligation and/or Volunteer Buyout

Staging a production of this size takes a village and we cannot do it without the generous time given by our parent/guardian volunteers. To keep participation fees to a minimum and reduce overall costs, MPBT relies on parent / guardian volunteers. Volunteers have generously given over 2200 hours each year to help make The Nutcracker a success!!! THANK YOU!!

Parent / Guardian Volunteer Requirement: Volunteers will sign up for one Activity (i.e., backstage, auction, merchandise, business solicitation, costumes, Sunday Parties, etc.), totaling approximately 17-20 hours of volunteer time. *Please note, some Activities will require volunteers to provide “support” during a show (such as Backstage, Auction, Merchandise, Costumes, Sunday Parties).* The Activity Lead volunteer will work with their volunteers on scheduling to ensure the needs of the Activity are met AND the volunteer can attend the show of their choice. A list of volunteer Activities, including job description & requirements, will be available on our website mid-July and reviewed during the Mandatory Parent Meetings on August 22nd. Please check back

Monterey Peninsula Ballet Theatre, Corp. Mailing Address: PO Box 253 Carmel CA 93923



for more details! If you have any questions, please email us at info@mpballettheatre.org. MPBT is so grateful for our amazing volunteers!!

Opt-Out in Advance: *If you know you are not able to volunteer, please pursue our opt-out option - a payment of \$400 by September 15, 2026 - to complete your volunteer obligation. If we have not received your opt-out payment by September 15, we assume you will fulfill your volunteer obligation through one of the Volunteer Activities.*

Struggling to Meet Volunteer Commitment? We understand personal circumstances can change. If something arises limiting your ability to fulfill your hours, please email info@mpballettheatre.org so we can work with you to find resolution. If it becomes apparent during the course of the production season that a volunteer is not on-track to meet his/her volunteer commitments, a Board Member will reach out to discuss possible solutions. The volunteer may be charged a partial volunteer opt-out fee, to account for volunteer hours not completed. All invoiced partial volunteer opt-out fees must be paid no later than January 31, 2027 or the dancer's ability to audition for the 2027 season will be placed on hold until such invoice is paid.

PARTICIPATION FEE TABLE

Payment due no later than Friday, Sept 4, 2026

<u>Role</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u># of Parts</u>	<u>Ballet Class Requirement</u>
Petite	\$300	2 Parts (example: Gift, Mini Arabian, Mini Mouse, Mini Ballerina Doll)	One ballet class / week
Demi	\$400	2 parts (example: Fight Scene Soldier, Baker, Reed Pipe Corps)	One ballet class / week
Corps non-lead	\$450	2 or more parts (example: Garland, Snowflake, Mouse, Flower)	(Non-pointe): 2 ballet classes / week (Pointe): 2 ballet classes / week, 1 pointe class / week
Lead	\$500	2 or more parts	(Non-pointe): 2 ballet classes / week



		(example: Spanish Lead, Lead Ballerina Doll, Lead Soldier Doll)	(Pointe): 2 ballet classes / week, 1 pointe class / week
Principal	\$550	2 or more parts (example: Clara, Snow Queen, Arabian Lead, Rose Queen, Sugar Plum Fairy, Mouse Queen, Clara (Princess))	(Pointe): 2 ballet classes / week, 2 pointe class / week

REHEARSAL INFORMATION

Where Are Rehearsals? Rehearsals will take place at both TDC locations: Carmel Rancho *and* Carmel By The Sea (BTS) at 8th Avenue and Mission Street. Please review the rehearsal schedule for the exact location of your dancer’s rehearsal. *MPBT is deeply appreciative of The Dance Center’s generosity in donating their space for MPBT rehearsals.*

When Are Rehearsals? Most rehearsals will take place on Friday PM, Saturdays (afternoon/evening) and Sundays (afternoon/evening) from September 11th until November 21st. ***Please read the entire weekly e-newsletter***, or check the MPBT website (www.mpballettheatre.org) or **mpbtnutinfo** Instagram, for ***important updates on rehearsal times.***

Will my dancer’s rehearsal be on the same days / times each week? For the more beginning roles (i.e., Cherub, Cookies, Bon Bons, Presents, Mini Ballerina Dolls, Mini Soldier Dolls, Mini Mice), we will do our best this year to hold the rehearsal at the same day / time each week from 9/18 - 11/8 rehearsals. However, as roles start combining, the times will change. (For example, Mini Mice are lucky to be part of the Act 1 Fight Scene, and therefore may begin combining with the other roles in that scene in October.)

How will I be notified if the rehearsal time changes? Changes to the weekend schedule will be finalized by the Wednesday evening prior to rehearsals. Please be sure to refer to the rehearsal schedule on the MPBT website to reconfirm rehearsal times. In case a last minute “emergency” change needs to be made (either to the rehearsal schedule or location), MPBT will text impacted parents / dancers as quickly as possible.



Arrival Timing: Please ensure your dancers **arrive at rehearsals** as indicated below:

- **POINTE & LEAD Dancers:** arrive *no later than 30 minutes in advance* to ensure ample warm up time.
- **All Other Dancers:** arrive *no later than 10 minutes in advance* to ensure on-time start. Arriving earlier to warm up is highly recommended so as to prevent injury.

Rehearsals are typically only 30 mins-1 hour. As such, the dancer understands he/she/they will need to warm up in advance as rehearsal time is solely dedicated to learning/refinement of roles.

Pick Up Timing: All dancers **must be picked up promptly at the end of their rehearsal block**. Please note MPBT does not have administrative staff on site during rehearsal weekends and instructors are in rehearsals and cannot watch dancers until a parent/guardian arrives. As such, please be sure to coordinate for an on-time pick up of your dancer(s).

Do we have MANDATORY rehearsal over Thanksgiving Week?

- **YES on Saturday, November 21**
- **NO rehearsals on:**
 - Sunday, November 22
 - Saturday, November 28
 - Sunday, November 29

We want to ensure we have the entire cast on Saturday, November 21. Therefore, we are not rehearsing Sunday 11/22 nor the weekend after Thanksgiving. We greatly appreciate your support and attendance to make the November 21st full run-through a success.

KEY DATES: CRITICAL (Required) Rehearsal and Other Nutcracker Activities

We greatly appreciate you adding these dates to your calendar now!!

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
		<i>Approximate timing listed below subject to change. Please see "Rehearsal Schedule" for exact timing.</i>
August 12 (Wed)	Scholarship Applications due	Please email info@mpballettheatre.org for Scholarship application form and information <i>Recipients will be notified no later than Saturday, August 15</i>





August 16 (Sun)	Audition Forms Due	Links to the forms are posted on our website, www.mpballettheatre.org , under <i>Audition Form and Performance Paperwork</i> .
August 22 (Sat)	Auditions Parent Meeting (required)	The Dance Center (“TDC”), Carmel Rancho Parent meetings will be held in Studio 1 during dancer audition times
August 27 (Thurs)	Cast list will be released. <i>The list is typically posted in the evening, often after 9:00 PM.</i>	Please check the following sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instagram: mpbtinfo • MPBT website: www.mpballettheatre.org
August 28-September 2	Participation Fee Invoices sent	MPBT Treasurer will invoice financially responsible parent/guardian for all participation fees at the email/mobile phone number provided in audition paperwork.
September 4 (Fri)	Participation Forms & Fee due	All forms found on MPBT website: www.mpballettheatre.org ***All forms must be completed / all fees paid prior to dancer being allowed to attend rehearsal.
Labor Day Weekend	<i>NO Rehearsal</i>	
9/11-9/13 (CRITICAL)	<i>Choreography finalization Costume Fittings</i>	TDC Carmel Rancho For ballet levels ½ & above
9/13 (Sun)	<i>Nutcracker Kick-Off Party & “Buddies” announced!</i>	11:15 AM-12:15 PM TDC Carmel Rancho <u>Kinder/beginning/ballet 1 dancers:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required costume fitting will be held Sunday 9/13 from 12:30-3:30 PM, right after the Kick-Off Party. - Rehearsals / Choreography for this group begins 9/18-9/20 weekend.
9/18-9/20 (CRITICAL)	<i>Choreography finalization Costume Fittings</i>	TDC Carmel Rancho All Cast Members (except Adult roles)
Between 9/16-9/20	<i>Photo Shoot (Certain Principal & Lead roles only)</i>	TDC Carmel Rancho, Studio 1, Exact Date & Time TBA Note: Required dancers will be notified individually



10/24	“Boo Buddy” Station	Come early or stay late to make a special gift for your buddy!! (all supplies provided by MPBT)
10/31 (Sat)	NO Rehearsal	Happy Halloween! PLEASE NOTE: Depending on availability of instructors, MPBT will move Saturday rehearsals to Sunday Nov. 1 (if possible).
11/1 (Sun)	YES Rehearsal!	(May include rehearsals of roles that would have rehearsed on Saturday, October 31)
11/7-11/8	“Appreciation Station” & Merchandise Sales	Save extra time to spend time at our Teacher Appreciation station & shop for Nutcracker merchandise!!
All dates below are CRITICAL (ALL CAST REQUIRED)		
11/14-11/15 (Sat & Sun)	Full Act 1 & Act 2 Run-Through	TDC Carmel Rancho 11/14 ~ 2:30-6:30pm 11/15 ~ 12:30-4pm Still Have Questions? <i>It will be rehearsed which day</i>
11/21 (Sat)	Full Show Run-Through	TDC Carmel Rancho 11/21 ~ 2:00-6:30pm See you at a Parent Meeting on Saturday, August 22!
12/5 & 12/6 (Sat & Sun)	Full Act 1 & Act 2 Run-Through	TDC Carmel Rancho 12/5 ~ 2:30-6:30pm 12/6 ~ 12:30-4pm General Questions <i>Still TBD which Act will be rehearsed which day</i>
Scholarship Applications		info@mpballettheatre.org
12/8 (Tues)	Tech Rehearsal	5:30 PM (approx.) Costume & hair required; makeup optional
Fees / Invoicing / Payment		Sunset Center invoicing@mpballettheatre.org Kinder / Beginning Ballet / Ballet 1 arrive ~6:00 PM
Cast List		Most cast members are released when their part is complete. Website: www.mpballettheatre.org Instagram: @mpbntutinfo
Rehearsal Schedule		<i>Please note: complimentary photographs will be taken of dancers in costume</i> Website: www.mpballettheatre.org
12/9 (Wed)	Tech Rehearsal	5:30 PM (approx.) Costume & hair required; makeup optional
Volunteering		Sunset Center info@mpballettheatre.org Kinder / Beginning Ballet / Ballet 1 arrive ~6:00 PM.
Reporting an Illness		Most cast released when their part is complete. info@mpballettheatre.org
		<i>Please note: complimentary photographs will be taken of dancers in costume</i>
12/10 (Thurs)	Full Dress Rehearsal Buddy Gift Distribution	5:30 PM Call time. Full costume, hair & full makeup required Sunset Center Kinder / Beginning Ballet / Ballet 1 arrive ~6:00 PM.



APPENDIX: LIABILITY WAIVER (reference copy)

I am fully aware of the risks and hazards connected with the use of The Dance Center (Carmel Rancho and By-The-Sea), TDCC, LLC, Monterey Peninsula Ballet Theatre (MPBT), and Sunset Center, including but not limited to purchase fees or failure to pay and hereby elect to voluntarily enter an agreement, knowing that the associated risks and hazards may result in a loss on my behalf.

I VOLUNTARILY ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY RISKS OR LOSS OR PROPERTY DAMAGE that may be sustained by me, or loss or damage to property owned by me, as a result of the use of The Dance Center (Carmel Rancho and By-The-Sea), MPBT or Sunset Center. I hereby RELEASE, WAIVE, DISCHARGE, AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE, The Dance Center, MPBT or Sunset Center, their officers, servants, agents, and employees (hereinafter referred to as RELEASEES) from any and all liability, claims, demands that may be sustained by me, or to any property belonging to me, while use of The Dance Center (Carmel Rancho and By-The-Sea), TDCC, LLC, MPBT, or Sunset Center. It is my expressed intent that this release and hold harmless agreement shall bind the members of my family and spouse, if I am alive, and my heirs, assigns and personal representative, if I am deceased, and shall be deemed as a RELEASE, WAIVE, DISCHARGE, and CONVENTION TO SUE, the above named RELEASEES.

I hereby further agree that this Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement shall be constructed in accordance with the laws of the State of California. In signing this release, I acknowledge and represent that I HAVE READ THE FORGOING Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement, UNDERSTAND IT AND SIGN IT VOLUNTARILY as my own free act and deed; no oral representations, statements, or inducements, apart from the foregoing written agreements have been made; and I EXECUTE THIS RELEASE FOR FULL, ADEQUATE AND COMPLETE CONSIDERATION FULLY INTENDING TO BE BOUND BY SAME.