Tap dance adds twist to classic holiday ballet

BY KENYA MILTON

Many watch the same Christmas classics every year. This year, Creighton is putting a new twist on the old favorite “The Nutcracker.”

Performances start next weekend at the Lied Education Center for the Arts.

“The Nutcracker Fantasy” features selected works from P.I. Tchaikovsky’s famous holiday ballet “The Nutcracker.”

All of the scenes from the original ballet “The Nutcracker” will not be performed.

However, “A Nutcracker Fantasy” will be just as wonderful as the original, said Valerie Roche, associate professor and dance coordinator.

It will differ from the original by including a tap-dancing troop of soldiers and Mouse King played by Dan Fix, Arts & Sciences sophomore.

The show has done the same so many times,” Fix said. “I like it better this way because the soldiers look stronger tapping than they do with ballet.”

Roche said the majority of the performers are Creighton students. Some are students from the Omaha Academy of Ballet and some are former ballet students of Omaha students.

“A Nutcracker Fantasy” is not yet an annual Christmas tradition at Creighton, but members of its cast and crew say they are hopeful it will become a tradition.

“It’s possible that the ballet can become an annual event, but it depends on how well it is received.” Roche said. “If the university wants it to become an annual event then it probably will become one.”

The staff of “A Nutcracker Fantasy” hopes the show provides a solid dancing opportunity and a positive experience for its students.

“It’s a training tool and opportunity for the dancers. A dancer should dance this ballet several times during his or her career,” Roche said.

Jen Taylor, Arts & Sciences junior, plays Mother Ginger in the ballet and said she is enjoying every minute of it.

“I’m very excited about the ballet, I was asked out of the blue to play the part as the mother and I was thrilled,” Taylor said. “I’m very, very happy to be in this production. It’s a great opportunity.”

The dancers will present a second show along with “A Nutcracker Fantasy.”

An Old Testament story entitled “Lamentations,” choreographed by Sandra Organ, special guest choreographer, will be shown along with “A Nutcracker Fantasy.”

Organ is a soloist with the Houston Ballet Company located in Houston, Texas. She has danced with the company for twelve seasons. She has since formed the Sandra Organ Dance Company, a contemporary ballet ensemble in Houston.

“A Nutcracker Fantasy” will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 19 through 21 and at 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 22. Tickets are $5 for students, faculty and staff. For reservations, call the Lied Center box office at 281-1448.

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