

Dance students perform in 'Nutcracker'

By Jill Letizia

Senior dance major Melissa Kanavel has been dancing since she was a child, but never like this.

As the American Repertory Ballet (ARB) presents the seasonal favorite *The Nutcracker* across the state, Kanavel is on stage for every performance.

"I have been dancing since I was three years old and this is the biggest show I've been in," said Kanavel. "We perform at venues all over New Jersey."

Danielle Nolen, a sophomore dance major at Rider, is also in every performance of the ballet. Both students train in the advanced levels of the Princeton Ballet School, where Rider's dance majors and minors take studio classes.

Practices started mid-September and larger rehearsals with the whole company of *The Nutcracker* began in October. They are held every Saturday and Sunday.

"It gets very extensive," Kanavel added.

Dr. Kim Chandler Vaccaro, who teaches dance at both Rider and the Princeton Ballet School, said, "[ARB] is New Jersey's leading dance company, and their *Nutcracker* is a masterpiece."

This is the 41st season ARB has staged the ballet with music by Tchaikovsky.

Star Ledger critic Robert Johnson gave the opening performance a rave review: "Offering an ingenious twist on the story, innovative choreography by Graham

Lustig and outfitted with scrumptious scenery and costumes by designer Zack Brown, this 'Nutcracker' is itself the nicest, dancing Christmas present that anyone could receive."

Vaccaro agreed.

"This adaptation of *Nutcracker* is a magical experience with an updated story line, beautiful sets and scenery, and exquisite dancing by ARB company members," she said.

Students, adults and children will all enjoy this new production, Nolen says, because it gives "the traditional ballet a new twist that allows the viewer to see the talent of the dancers on the stage as well as retaining the mystical, fantasy land that audiences have come to know and love."

ARB is the dance company associated with both the Rider University and the Princeton Ballet School dance programs.

A professional dancer and choreographer since 1981, Vaccaro serves as an educational consultant for ARB and is responsible for writing the study guides for their public school programs and school shows of *The Nutcracker*.

The Nutcracker is performed during the week for public school students. There will be one performance in Trenton's War Memorial Patriot Theater, and two at the State Theater of New Jersey in New Brunswick.

"It is a lot of fun for us and the kids," said Kanavel.



Poster by Eduardo Patina and Val Ford

A dancer performs in the American Repertory Ballet's *The Nutcracker*, which features two students.

Kanavel, who dances for the ARB workshop's second company, can be seen in Act 1 dancing as Nanny in the party scene and as a BonBon in Act 2. She is also one of the Russian dancers and an understudy for the company's *Waltz of the Flowers*.

"It is a lot of work and preparation but it is also a lot of fun," said Kanavel.

Nolen can be seen dancing as a BonBon.

Performances are held Sunday, Dec. 5, at 1 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. at Trenton's War Memorial Patriot Theater; and Dec. 18 and 19 at 1 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Westminster preps for holiday concerts

By Madeleine Johnson

With end-of-the-semester stress often overshadowing holiday cheer, Westminster Choir College's (WCC) month-long celebration just may be able to make this time of year a little more joyous for frazzled students.

WCC will offer an array of traditional and non-traditional performances throughout the remainder of the semester. According to Anne Sears, the Director of WCC External Affairs, the holiday performances this season are varied enough to appeal to every taste.

"There's something for everyone," she said. "We have a broad range of music offered at the highest levels of performance."

The season kicks off with *Cool Yule Jazz II*, tonight at 8 p.m. in the Bristol Chapel. Philip Orr, piano; Jerry Rife, clarinet; Edward Taylor, drums; and Roy Cunning, bass, will all perform Christmas standards that cover the entire jazz movement.

On Saturday, Dec. 4, the Westminster Concert Bell Choir will present the first of its three concerts. The following two performances will be on Sunday, Dec. 5. All three of the concerts will be performed in the Bristol Chapel.

"The bell choir uses the largest set of handbells in the world," Sears said. "It's a different kind of performance. It's aural and visual."

Freshman Zach Aguanno, a member of the handbell choir, said that the performance is exciting and the bells alone are striking.

"It's a great experience and if you've never seen handbells before, they really are quite impressive," Aguanno said. "The sheer sizes of the bells are a thing to be reckoned with."

For those who have heard enough Christmas carols, the Westminster Opera Theater will put on four performances of

Hansel and Gretel in The Playhouse. The show will run for four days, beginning on Friday, Dec. 10 and will run through Sunday, Dec. 12.

"Most adults love opera and it's a good show for children," Sears said. "It's a story all children know, even if it is kind of scary."

The first of two evenings of readings and carols also begins on Friday, Dec. 10 and continues on Saturday, Dec. 11, though the Saturday performance has a limited number of tickets available. The "pageantry" will take place in the Princeton University Chapel and includes singing choirs, a brass section, dramatic lighting and readings by two students and President Rozanski.

Rider senior Justin Beezer will read a selection from Langston Hughes' "Carol of the Brown King" on Friday evening. Saturday, Westminster senior Jenna Lebhertz will read from "Why Not a Star."

The WCC holiday series will end with two productions of Fuma Sacra's *Noël Nouvelet: Christmas in Ancient France*, showcasing French renaissance and medieval music. Fuma Sacra, or "Holy Smoke," will perform on Sunday, Dec. 19 and Monday, Dec. 20.

Instead of pulling all-nighters to get on the Dean's list, take some time out to tap into the memories of December's past, where this time of the year was only about being extra good to get off Santa's naughty list. WCC offers productions this month that are guaranteed to get a little holiday spirit into the most over-worked and under-slept college student.

"The holiday series is a great way for the Lawrenceville students to get acquainted with WCC's performances if they've never seen one before," said Sears. "Music is such an important part of so many people's traditions and we're glad to offer this to the community. Just don't wait until last minute, because tickets have been known to sell out quickly."

Campus Corner

FRIDAY		WEDNESDAY	
DEC. 3	SEC Film: <i>Collateral</i> 7:30 p.m., BLC Theater Cool Yule Jazz II 8 p.m., Bristol Chapel	DEC. 8	PCM Faith Matters 7 p.m., Gill Chapel PCM Open Mic Night 7:30 p.m., BLC Pub IVCF Worship and Fellowship 8:30 p.m., Wright Lounge
SATURDAY		THURSDAY	
DEC. 4	CCM Mass 4 p.m., Gill Chapel SEC Film: <i>Collateral</i> 7:30 p.m., BLC Theater Handbell Holiday Concert 8 p.m., Bristol Chapel	DEC. 9	RURA Holiday Meeting 11:45 a.m., Fireside Lounge Trenton Area Soup Kitchen 2:40 p.m., Gill Chapel Celebration of Lights 4:30 p.m., BLC Theater Westminster Opera Theater: <i>Hansel & Gretel</i> 8 p.m., Playhouse SEC Film: <i>Manchurian Candidate</i> , 7:30 p.m., BLC Theater
SUNDAY		FRIDAY	
DEC. 5	CCM Mass 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., Gill Chapel Rider Choir Holiday Concert 3 p.m., Gill Chapel Handbell Holiday Concert 8 p.m., Bristol Chapel	DEC. 10	Last Day of Classes Don't forget to begin studying for final exams! Murder Mystery Dinner Theater, 6 p.m., BLC Faculty Dining Room Distinguished Writer Series: John Edgar Wideman 7 p.m., BLC Theater SEC Film: <i>Manchurian Candidate</i> , 7:30 p.m., BLC Theater Wild West Bronc Buffet 10 p.m., Daly Dining Hall
MONDAY		TUESDAY	
DEC. 6	PCM Worship 5:30 p.m., Gill Chapel RU Band Concert 7:30 p.m., Yvonne Theater Clothing and blanket donation drop off 8 to 9:30 a.m., BLC	DEC. 7	Hanukkah begins Faculty Appreciation Day 8:30 a.m. - 7 p.m., Bookstore