

# ACCENT *on entertainment*

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Scenes from Neos Dance Theatre's "A 1940s Nutcracker."

PHOTOS PROVIDED

## New 'Nutcrackers'

Three choice versions of the classic holiday ballet in NE Ohio

**John Benson**  
The Chronicle-Telegram

Tchaikovsky's classic ballet "The Nutcracker" debuted in 1892. However, it wasn't until the middle of the 20th century in America that the production became a Christmas tradition.

That continues this year in Northeast Ohio with numerous productions. The Cleveland Ballet will be performing Tchaikovsky's classic Dec. 15 through 15 at the Hanna Theatre, while the Moscow Ballet's "Great Russian Nutcracker" visits Cleveland for shows Dec. 16 at Music Hall in Cleveland.

One of the more unique adaptations is Neos Dance Theatre's original "A 1940s Nutcracker," which makes its Lorain County debut Dec. 15 through 17 at the Stocker Center's Hoke Theatre.

"This will be our first go at the Stocker Center," Neos Co-founder and Artistic Director Bobby Wesner said. "It's important in a couple of different ways. I think that the local audiences are very familiar with a particular production that's gone on there in the past.

### 'A 1940S NUTCRACKER'

**WHAT:** Neos Dance Theatre  
**WHEN:** 7:30 p.m. Dec. 15 and 16 and 2 p.m. Dec. 17  
**WHERE:** Lorain County Community College's Hoke Theatre, 1005 N. Abbe Road, Elyria  
**TICKETS:** \$15 to \$35  
**INFO:** Call (800) 995-5222 or visit [Stockerartscenter.com](http://Stockerartscenter.com)

"Also, I think to switch gears and to do it with a show that has a new take, one that actually pays homage to the community itself and the region, is pretty important."

Neos Dance Theatre, which earlier this year opened a dance center in Oberlin, is taking a few liberties with the classic ballet by paying homage to an iconic age of film, fashion, American Christmas traditions, the Industrial Age and World War II.

"A 1940s Nutcracker" puts local his-

### 'NUTCRACKER SUITE'

**WHAT:** Cleveland Ballet  
**WHEN:** 7 p.m. Dec. 15 and 1 and 7 p.m. Dec. 16  
**WHERE:** Hanna Theatre, 2067 E. 14th St., Cleveland  
**TICKETS:** \$25 to \$45  
**INFO:** Call (866) 546-1353 or visit [PlayhouseSquare.org](http://PlayhouseSquare.org)

tory into play in a clever and spirited reimagining of Nutcracker.

"What we're doing is taking a more traditional version of "The Nutcracker" and preserving the music, the majority of the storyline, but we're updating it," Wesner said. "We're putting it into the region of Lorain County and kind of the Greater Cleveland area in the 1940s."

The multimedia show, which includes a cast of 18 professional and guest Neos dancers, along with 27 local community members, is using

### 'GREAT RUSSIAN NUTCRACKER'

**WHAT:** Moscow Ballet  
**WHEN:** 3 and 7 p.m. Dec. 16  
**WHERE:** Public Hall, 500 Lakeside Ave., Cleveland  
**TICKETS:** \$28 to \$48  
**INFO:** Visit [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com)

projection mapping to put images and movies onto various screens.

Wesner said something else unique about "A 1940s Nutcracker" is it caters to ballet connoisseurs, as well as dance neophytes with an easily accessible narrative.

"The Nutcracker" is a proven holiday tradition," Wesner said. "Families lean into it. It's something they want to celebrate year after year. With the Stocker Center having that tradition as well, it's something we certainly feel we can fill.

"We absolutely hope to make this an annual event at the Stocker Center."

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