



 charlottesville ballet

SENSORY-FRIENDLY  
Nutcracker  
Sweets

**PERFORMANCE GUIDE**



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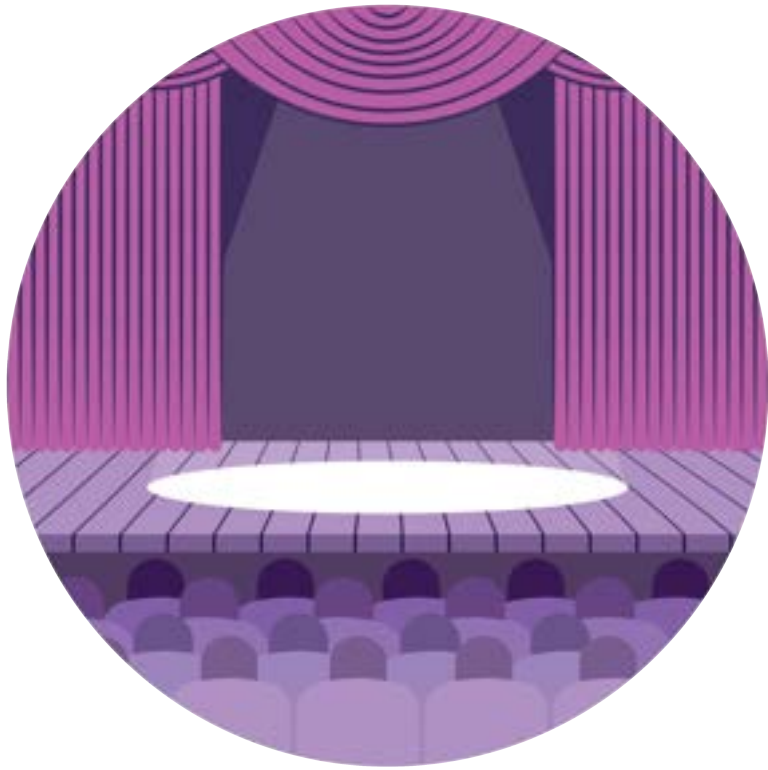


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# What is a Sensory-Friendly Performance?



Our sensory-friendly performances are designed to be a fun and enjoyable theater experience for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), sensory sensitivities, hearing impairments, or any other disabilities. Patrons can move, vocalize, and express themselves freely in a gentle and judgement-free atmosphere.

This new production has been tailor-made to create a welcoming experience for all. The abridged version features a shortened runtime under 60 minutes, reduces loud sounds and bright lights, and omits total darkness in the theater.

A calm space will be available throughout the show for those who need to take a break, and an ASL interpreter will be translating the entire event.



# Who Should Attend a Sensory-Friendly Performance?

Sensory-friendly performances are intended primarily for families and their loved ones with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), sensory sensitivities, hearing impairments, or any other physical or intellectual disabilities. It's also a space particularly well-suited for younger children or those who haven't been exposed to theater experiences before.

Our intention is to provide a safe and comfortable performance experience for the entire audience!



# Where is the Performance?

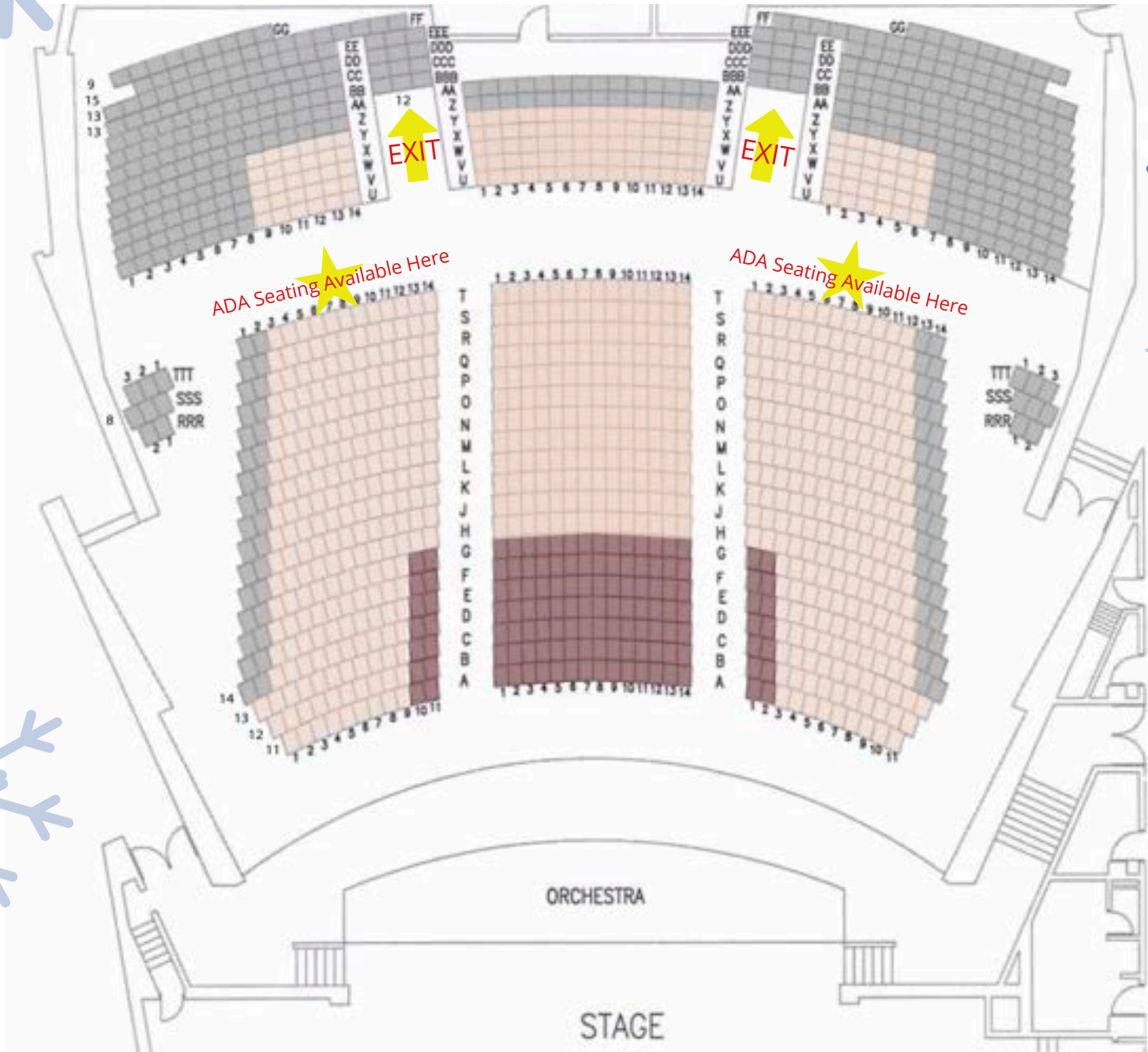
Charlottesville Ballet's sensory-friendly performance of *Nutcracker Sweets* will be held at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Performing Arts Center (MLK PAC)!

**You are welcome to move around during the show.** Below are some pictures of the venue, and we've included a seat map on the next page so you can easily find aisles and exits ahead of time.





# MLK PAC Seating Chart



# *Additional Venue Information*

## **Accessible Parking**

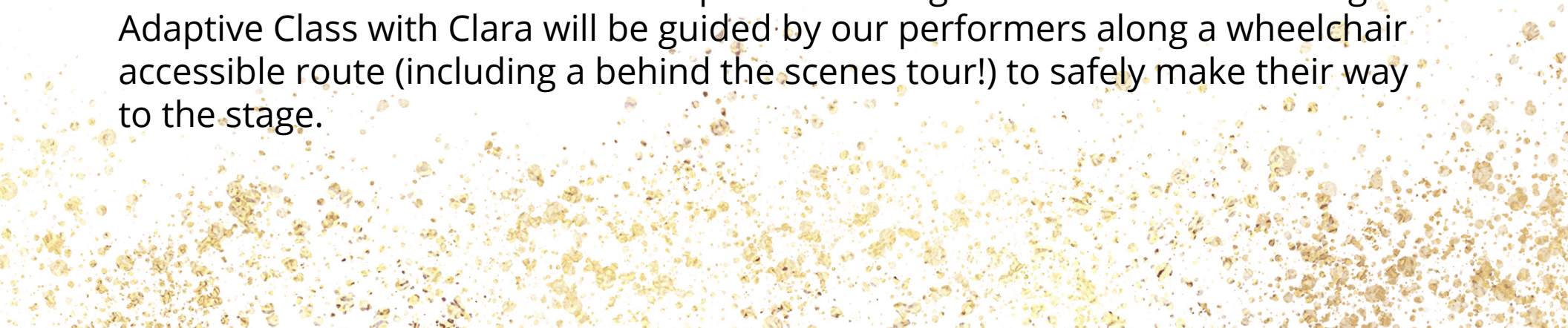
Limited handicap parking is available, and there is also a drop-off circle where patrons can pull right up to the auditorium doors. Please display your handicap hangtag when using the drop off circle and let one of our staff members know if you need additional assistance!

## **Restrooms**

Public restrooms are located in the lobby with two large stall bathrooms for men and women; no family restrooms are available. The MLK PAC does not have an installed changing table in the venue, but Charlottesville Ballet will be providing a baby changing table in the women's restroom for our performances.

## **Stage Accessibility**

MLK PAC does feature an ADA compliant backstage area. Patrons attending Adaptive Class with Clara will be guided by our performers along a wheelchair accessible route (including a behind the scenes tour!) to safely make their way to the stage.





# FAQs

## **What accommodations will be available? How does this differ from regular performances?**

- **Quiet Space:** A quiet area in the lobby will be accessible throughout the performance for people who may need a break, with:
  - Tools such as our performance and character guides
  - Coloring and fidgets
  - Noise-cancelling headphones
  - Nutcracker books from the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library
- **Relaxed Atmosphere:** Patrons can feel comfortable to come and go from their seats as needed. Feel free to bring in sensory devices and other items like glitter bottles, therapy balls, toys, and pillows/blankets.
- **Communication-Friendly:** Tablets and smartphones are welcome for non-verbal audience members who use these devices to communicate. An ASL interpreter will be translating the entire event.
- **What about snacks?** While not allowed inside the auditorium, feel free to enjoy snacks and drinks in the lobby.



## Will the show be different from regular performances?

Yes, in the following ways:

- **Shorter, Accessible Performance:** This abridged version of *The Nutcracker* is under 60 minutes with no intermission, making it easier for audiences to stay engaged. We'll start with a narrated introduction of the story and characters in Act I, followed by the delightful dancing of Act II in the Land of the Sweets.
- **Adjusted Environment:** The house lights will remain dimmed during the performance (it will never be completely dark) and both lighting and sound effects will be reduced to create a gentler atmosphere.

## Can I expect noise during the show?

In the ballet, the characters don't traditionally speak. Instead, they use their bodies and faces to tell the story.

There will be music playing from the speakers (Tchaikovsky's famous score), as well as some narration in the beginning to tell the story.

There will be some noise from members of the audience when they laugh and clap. You may also hear output from AAC devices, tablets, toys, and vocalizations from other patrons.







# A Social Story: Going to the Theater



Arrive at  
MLK PAC



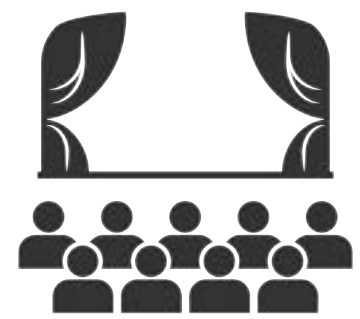
Stop by the  
Box Office



Find Your  
Seat



Enjoy the  
Show!

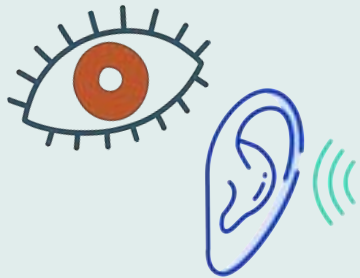




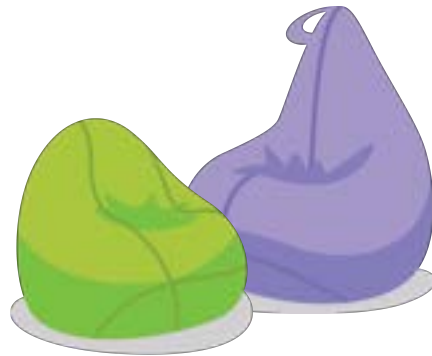
Once the show starts, we're going to...



**Watch and Listen**



**Use the Break Area if We Need a Rest**



**Express Your Joy at the End!**



# About the Ballet: Synopsis

The Nutcracker story begins during the holidays, at a festive holiday party held at the Stahlbaum house. Clara is in the midst of enjoying the party when her mysterious Uncle Drosselmeyer arrive with a bag of full of gifts for all of the children. He is a toymaker and a magician, and he casts a spell on them, having them act out an exciting battle.

But Drosselmeyer has a special gift, just for Clara. He's made for her a wooden nutcracker doll. All of the other children marvel at it, but her little brother Fritz quickly becomes jealous. He grabs the nutcracker away from Clara, and as they fight over it, the nutcracker breaks. Clara is devastated.

Their father scolds Fritz and sends him up to bed, but Drosselmeyer and the family's maid have already mended Clara's nutcracker. She thanks them and dances with it in her arms, delighted with her present. She stays up very late at the party, and stumbles off to bed as soon as the guests leave.



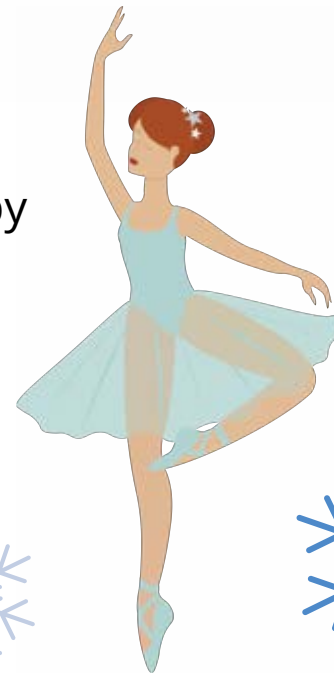


During the night, Clara realizes that she has left her nutcracker downstairs. She creeps back to the parlor to collect it, and falls asleep under the Christmas tree. She is woken again, this time to a crowd of mice around her. She is terrified, until her Uncle Drosselmeyer appears and scares them away.

Around Clara, the familiar shape of the parlor begins to change. The Christmas tree grows larger and larger, and her Uncle Drosselmeyer reveals the other half of his surprise: he transforms her nutcracker doll into a real nutcracker prince. He does so in the nick of time, because the mice return with the fearsome Mouse King at their head.

The Nutcracker's toy soldiers battle with the mice, until the Nutcracker himself fights a duel with the Mouse King. The Mouse King kicks the Nutcracker to the floor, and is just about to finish him off when Clara throws her shoe to distract him. The Nutcracker Prince is able to defeat the distracted Mouse King, who dies dramatically as his mice retreat.

Clara has only a moment to celebrate their victory when she realizes that the parlor has grown cold and that snowflakes are falling around them. Her Nutcracker leads her to the Land of Snow, where they are greeted by the powerful Snow Queen. She invites Clara and her prince to dance among the drifting, twirling snowflakes.



*But the adventure is not over!  
Here's where you come in:*

Clara and the Nutcracker Prince travel through the Snow Queen's realm to the Land of Sweets, where everything is made of candy! The ruler of this land, the glittering Sugar Plum Fairy, not only gives Clara her magic wand, but welcomes the girl to sit on her throne to watch her courtiers dance.

As you watch Act II of the famous Nutcracker ballet, take in the sights, hear the sounds, and imagine the smell and taste of the delicious treats that Clara receives during her experience.



# Meet the Characters!

*Nutcracker Sweets* features a smaller cast size with all parts played by adult performers, creating less visual stimulation than our full production of *The Nutcracker* with more than 100 performers ages 5 to 80!

**Clara**



**Drosselmeyer**

**The Nutcracker**



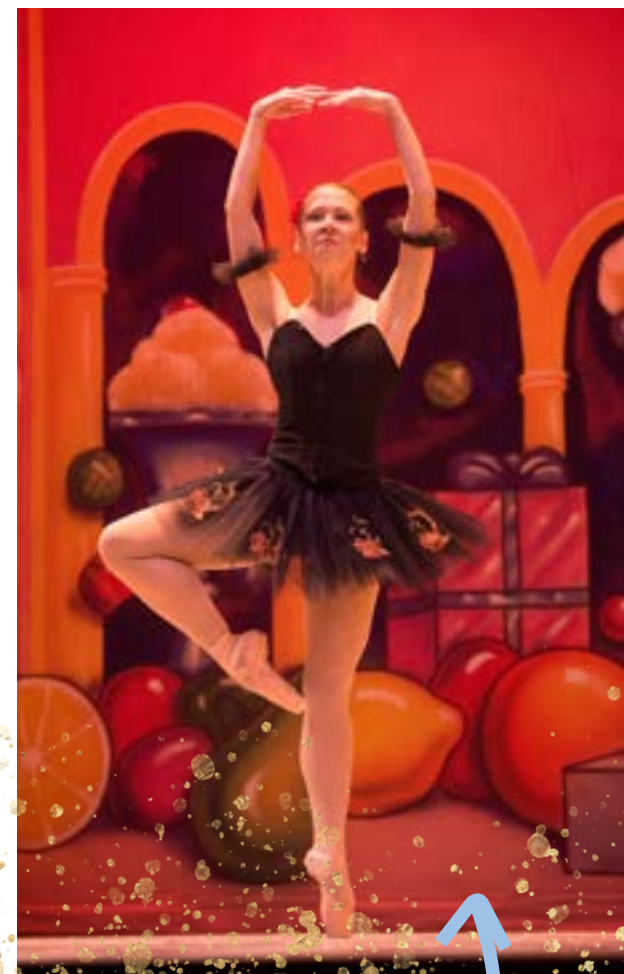




The Mouse King



Coffee



Chocolate



**Parasol  
Cookie**



**The Dew Drop Fairy  
& Flowers**





# The Sugar Plum Fairy & Her Cavalier



Candy Cane



Madame Shepherd & Her Sheep



...Plus other surprise guests!





# Adaptive Class with Clara



Following the performance, VIP ticket holders can join us on stage for an adaptive dance version of our signature "Class with Clara" event.

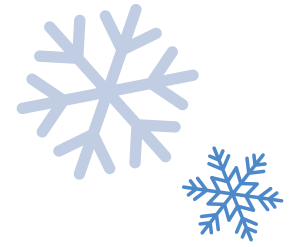
This interactive experience allows participants to come onstage with their families to engage with the Charlottesville Ballet dancers in a supportive environment. Learn introductory ballet steps, take pictures with the dancers, and receive a special souvenir to take home.

**We welcome participants of all abilities to this event!**





# Adaptive Class with Clara



Like our CB Moves Adaptive Dance classes, this event is designed for participants with Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and any other developmental or intellectual disabilities. We welcome participants of all abilities to this event, including those with mobility aids and wheelchairs.

Caregivers are encouraged to join alongside participants throughout the class to provide support.

Please note any accessibility needs in the comments section of your ticket order, and reach out to our box office with any questions.



**CB Box Office:** 434.218.3652 | [tickets@charlottesvilleballet.org](mailto:tickets@charlottesvilleballet.org)



We can't wait for you to join us  
for this special performance!

 charlottesville ballet

