

# Evil vies with innocence in 'Nutcracker' spectacular

## The Nutcracker: A Play

Presented by PlayMakers Repertory Co.

Thursday, December 3 through  
Sunday, December 20

8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday  
2 p.m. Sundays

Paul Green Theatre

Tickets: \$8 to \$19.50  
For more information, call 962-PLAY

The traditional telling of the Nutcracker tale embodies the childhood belief in magic, the triumph of good over evil and the fulfillment of the heart's desire.

For the fourth consecutive year, PlayMakers Repertory Company will present *The Nutcracker: A Play* during the holiday season. PlayMakers' associate producing director, David Hammond, adapted this version of the play from the original 1816 work, *The Nutcracker and Mouse-King* by E.T.A. Hoffman. Dede Corvino, a PlayMakers cast member since 1987, directs this year's production.

The tale presents a coming-of-age story for the young Marie, played by Connan Morrissey. Morrissey reprises her role from last year's production as Marie, who must battle evil, maintain her faith and risk all for true love.

True to the traditional Christmas tale, PlayMakers' production is the story

## theater

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of a young girl who receives the present of a wooden nutcracker. Following the customary story line, little brother breaks cherished nutcracker, girl mourns, evil Mouse prince threatens girl, Nutcracker comes to life to save girl, girl is pleasantly surprised.

When the Nutcracker is captured and taken to the evil underworld of Mousalia, mysterious Godfather Drosselmeier (Ray Dooley) tells Marie her beloved Nutcracker is really the handsome young soldier Christian (Mark Ransom Eis), transformed many years ago by the spell of Mouserinks, ruthless Queen and ruler of Mousalia.

The ageless Mouserinks speaks in rhyming verse and rules her underworld with an iron claw. Her dark domain comes complete with the glittering red eyes of her minions and with sets cleverly designed to provide one surprise after another. Mouserinks holds the Nutcracker's magic sword that he must win back in order to destroy the Queen and her son for good.

Drosselmeier also tells Marie the chance to save Christian from his curse comes only once every 100 years and only the love of someone "pure of heart" can rescue him. So Marie, her younger brother Fritz and old Drosselmeier journey to Mousalia to save the Nutcracker and battle Mouserinks.

*The Nutcracker* is full of energy and spectacle and contains the universal

theme of true love, making it a play everyone can enjoy. *The Nutcracker* is one of PlayMakers' most popular productions, therefore purchase your tickets early and often.

### The Good Guys:

#### Ray Dooley as Drosselmeier:

*Drosselmeier is the mysteriously old Godfather of Marie, whose faith and good magic has the power to save the Nutcracker from his curse.*

#### On the formation of the character:

What his concerns were being a 700-year-old-magician. He has a deep love for other characters. He needs Christian and Marie to right things.

#### On Drosselmeier's relationship to Marie: He needs her. She is the key to releasing Christian (from Mouserinks' curse.)

Is there any Drosselmeier in you? I certainly hope so. He is a dear and funny man.

What does "pure of heart" mean to you? It's the power to believe completely in something, body and soul.

#### Connan Morrissey as Marie:

*Marie is the child who comes of age during the play. Her courage, faith, and purity of heart hold the key to the Nutcracker's salvation and the destruction of the evil Mouserinks.*

Do you like marzipan? (Marie eats a lot of this confection made of egg whites and almond milk.): Oh yeah, it's great stuff. It's beautiful, I love it.

On what it's like playing a child: It's great, it's a different body. Children have so much energy. You know they say, 'from the mouths of babes come pearls of wisdom'... there are none of the checking mechanisms adults have. They can say "I love you," and that's it and it's permanent.

Do you think Marie grows up too quickly in the end? (She passionately kisses the prince at the play's end.): I don't think so... she is being lead off to her future. How a modern audience interprets that is very different than what a fairy tale audience interprets. I think children say, 'Oh yeah she's going



The good guys: Connan Morrissey, Gene Alper and Ray Dooley

off to her future,' and adults say, 'What? Oh my god, what's that future going to be?' But I think she's ready for it and that's what the trial through Mousalia is about, to see if she's ready for the future. I think it's great to have a ritual for a girl because we see so many rituals for boys in fairy tales.

What does "pure of heart" mean to you? A willingness to love and to love completely.

### And the Bad:

#### Susanna Rinehart as Mouserinks:

*Mouserinks, the evil Mouse-Queen of the underground world Mousalia, wants to rule the upper world also, and just might with the help of a little black magic and her son, the three-headed mouse prince.*

Where Rinehart got the tremendous voice of Mouserinks: The voice comes in part from her mother and in part from lecturing her Drama 16 class. She also attributes it to a lot of vocal training and "lungs of steel."

On losing her voice the first year she performed Mouserinks: I had to get used to what I had to do to support the voice. A character that big needs a voice that big.

On her recent motherhood and Mouserinks: (Laughing) She's a different kind of mother (than me), certainly her children are different. The strength for this character is coming from a different place after giving birth.

On the formation of the character: A lot of it comes from the words I'm given. I find the character on the page. The evolution comes from the music and the size of the words which are huge curses and statements of evil and power. There is no such thing as doing the character half way. She gets in my body.

What does "pure of heart" mean to you? It means living the truth, somebody who lives truth and love.



Susanna Rinehart

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8:30 - Bulls v. Celtics	
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# The Nutcracker: A Play

by David Hammond  
based on the stories of E.T.A. Hoffmann

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