

PENNSYLVANIA BALLET

ROY KAISER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 2009 - 2010 SEASON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PENNSYLVANIA BALLET OFFERS ASSISTANCE TO BLIND PEOPLE AT PERFORMANCE OF *GEORGE BALANCHINE'S THE NUTCRACKER*

RESCHEDULED DATE

Tuesday, December 29, 2009 at 4 p.m. at the Academy of Music

Philadelphia, PA (December 23, 2009) – Pennsylvania Ballet and Independence Starts Here! are making it possible for blind people to experience *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker* like never before. The performance on **Tuesday, December 29 at 4 p.m.** will feature Audio Description (AD), a communication method that allows blind people to listen to a live description of the visual elements of a production.

"*Nutcracker* is such an important part of so many people's holiday memories. Pennsylvania Ballet is thrilled that we can offer a fuller experience for blind audience members," Artistic Director Roy Kaiser says.

Through AD, trained individuals (audio describers) use a microphone and transmitter to broadcast concise, objective verbal description of the visual elements of arts and culture events to persons who are blind or have low vision, wearing ear pieces attached to palm-sized receivers.

AD patrons will receive Braille and large-print programs for this performance. A pre-show touch tour (or "sensory seminar"), during which AD patrons are invited backstage to experience set, props, costumes, etc. via touch, will be offered at 3 p.m.

To register and purchase tickets for the AD performance of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker* on **Tuesday, December 29 at 4 p.m.** at the Academy of Music, call Arajua Backman at **215.587.6921**.

***Please note: this event was rescheduled due to severe weather on its original date.**

Pennsylvania Ballet is performing *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker* at the Academy of Music through December 31. Tickets can be purchased at paballet.org or by calling 215.893.1999.

Founded in 1963 by Balanchine student Barbara Weisberger, **Pennsylvania Ballet** is one of the nation's leading ballet companies. Headquartered in Philadelphia, the Company's annual local

season features six productions of classic favorites and new works, including the Philadelphia holiday tradition, *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*. For more information, call 215.551.7000 or visit paballet.org.

Independence Starts Here! is a collaborative initiative led by Art-Reach and VSA arts of Pennsylvania whose mission is to increase awareness of and audiences for accessible cultural programming and to help arts organizations become more accessible. This event is the latest in an ongoing series presented in partnership with local arts organizations that showcase the services and technology that make arts more accessible and that demonstrate the value of and need for engaging audiences with disabilities.

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