



## News Release

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## ***The Hip Hop Nutcracker Returns With National Tour to More Than 25 Cities***

***Show Features Hip Hop's Founding Father Kurtis Blow During Hip Hop's 50th Year***

### Press Assets

**NEW YORK -- August 11, 2023 -- A holiday dance mash-up for the whole family during hip hop's 50<sup>th</sup> year!** As artists, industry and fans celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hip Hop around the globe, ***The Hip Hop Nutcracker*** ([www.hiphopnutcracker.com](http://www.hiphopnutcracker.com)) announced its 2023 tour to more than 25 U.S. cities. The production reimagines Tchaikovsky's 130-year-old ballet as a contemporary holiday dance spectacle with hip hop pioneer Kurtis "The Breaks" Blow, the first rapper to be signed by a major label in 1979, performing as the show's MC. The show will make

"Hip Hop has evolved over 50 years into an increasingly diverse, global phenomenon with one of the most significant developments being the fusion of hip hop with other musical genres like classical music," says Blow who paved the way for generations of hip hop artists and fans after scoring the first certified gold record rap song in 1980. Blow is also responsible for "Christmas Rappin'," acclaimed for being the first rap holiday song. "I'm so proud to be a part of this iconic dance show and am excited to introduce new generations to the magic of hip hop."

*The Hip Hop Nutcracker* has been performed more than 250 times in 70 cities and the secret to its success is the powerhouse cast of a dozen all-star dancers, an on-stage DJ and an electric violinist who turn the beloved *Nutcracker* score on its head. The re-mixed and re-imagined version of the classic story smashes hip hop dance and Tchaikovsky's timeless music together for a heart-stirring and inspirational holiday event that takes audiences on a journey celebrating love, community and the magic of the holiday season.

Just like the original, Maria-Clara and the Nutcracker Prince go on a dream adventure battling a gang of mice, visiting the land of sweets and learning the lessons of the holiday season. Innovative digital graffiti and visuals transform the landscape of E.T.A. Hoffmann's beloved story from traditional 19th century Germany to the vibrant, diverse sights and sounds of contemporary New York City. Through the modern, self-expressive gaze of hip hop culture, the dynamic performers of *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* celebrate the magic of the entire holiday season on the most inclusive holiday of them all – New Year's Eve, a time for new beginnings.

Created in 2013 by Emmy winner Jennifer Weber (also Olivier nominated, and a two-time Tony nominee), who also directs and choreographs the show, and writer Mike Fitelson, the production has evolved into a masterpiece due to the creators' never-ending commitment to enhancing the production, and dancers who continue to raise the bar each year. *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* is executive produced by three-time Tony winner Eva Price.

For the latest news and updates follow *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) (@hiphopnutcracker), and [YouTube](#); #HipHopNutcracker.

#### **About Jennifer Weber (Director/Choreographer)**

Jennifer Weber is a double Tony Award nominee for the 2022-2023 Broadway season with nominations for Best Choreography for her Broadway debuts of & Juliet and KPOP (opening less than a week apart). The Tony Award nominated, Olivier Award nominated, and Emmy Award winning choreographer is based in New York City and Los Angeles. Weber also made her West End debut as the choreographer of & Juliet (Olivier Award Nominee) and the show is currently playing in Australia with US and UK national tours beginning in 2024. Weber made her film choreographer debut with the Disney Channel Original Movie, Disney Zombies 2 (World Choreography Award Nominee). Her choreography for the music videos from that film have been viewed over 500 million times. Weber collaborated with Disney+ as an Executive Producer and Choreographer for a new film version of The Hip Hop Nutcracker—a project she conceived, co-wrote and directed first as a stage show that tours annually and then was captured as an Emmy- winning PBS Special. Her film directing debut, While You Were Gone, which she wrote, directed and choreographed premiered at the prestigious Dance Camera West Festival and won a 2022 Emmy for Outstanding Arts/Entertainment Short Form Content. Her choreography for the music videos from that film have been viewed over 500 million times. Off-Broadway choreography credits include KPOP (Lortel Nomination), Teenage Dick (The Public, Woolley Mammoth, The Huntington, Pasadena Playhouse) Cruel Intentions (LPR/US National Tour), Stockholm (U.S. premiere).

#### **About Eva Price (Executive Producer)**

Eva Price (she/her), Producer, is an NYCLU/ACLU honoree and a three-time Tony award-winning, and two-time Olivier award-winning producer. Current: & Juliet (Broadway, 9 Tony nominations); Oklahoma! (West End, 2 Olivier Awards, Best Musical Revival); Jagged Little Pill (National Tour); Titanic (Off-Broadway, Lucille Lortel Award, Outstanding Musical). Upcoming: Redwood (La Jolla Playhouse). Selected credits: A Transparent

Musical (Center Theatre Group); Disney's The Hip Hop Nutcracker (Disney +), Jagged Little Pill (2 Tony Awards); Oklahoma! (2 Tony Awards, Best Musical Revival, National Tour); Tina - The Tina Turner Musical; What the Constitution Means to Me; Angels in America (Tony-winning Broadway Revival); Dear Evan Hansen (6 Tony Awards, 3 Olivier Awards); On Your Feet!; Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons on Broadway!; Peter and the Starcatcher (5 Tony Awards); Colin Quinn Long Story Short (directed by Jerry Seinfeld); Mindplay (Geffen Playhouse); Annie; The Merchant of Venice starring Al Pacino; Carrie Fisher's Wishful Drinking; The Addams Family (starring Nathan Lane and Bebe Neuwirth). Off-Broadway: Sanctuary City (NYTW); Cruel Intentions: The '90s Musical (le Poisson Rouge; National Tour); Drama Desk-nominated Found; The Lion (Drama Desk-winner); and Bess Wohl's critically acclaimed Small Mouth Sounds. International/Touring: The Hip Hop Nutcracker with Rap Icon Kurtis Blow (Emmy Award for PBS Special Live Capture).

### **About Mike Fitelson (Writer/Co-Creator)**

Mike Fitelson is the CEO of the United Palace, the 93-year-old Wonder Theatre in Washington Heights, Manhattan's 4<sup>th</sup> largest theatre. In 2014 as the executive director of the nonprofit United Palace of Cultural Arts (UPCA) he co-created "The Hip Hop Nutcracker" with Jennifer Weber, adapting the story and supplying the images for the scenery, and produced its premiere. Fitelson has worked to build the Northern Manhattan arts community for 21 years. He co-founded the annual arts festival, the Uptown Arts Stroll, in 2003; served in every capacity of the Manhattan Times, the bilingual community newspaper of Washington Heights and Inwood, from 2002-2011; and helped found the nonprofit Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance in 2006.

### **About New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC)**

Located in downtown Newark, N.J., NJPAC is America's most diverse performing arts center, and the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey – where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state's and the world's best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, which have reached almost 2 million children, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted more than 10 million visitors since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. [NJPAC.org](http://NJPAC.org) @njpac

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