FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker* Celebrates 16 Years of Vancouver Holiday Magic with International Ballet Stars

English National Ballet Lead Principal Dancers make their Vancouver debut alongside more than 200 B.C. performers and live music by the Vancouver Opera Orchestra, December 17-20 at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre

Photos/videos available here.

VANCOUVER, BC (OCTOBER 26, 2026) – A cherished Vancouver holiday tradition returns to the Queen Elizabeth Theatre this December as Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker*, presented by RBC, brings together internationally-known ballet stars, more than 200 British Columbian performers and the magnificent music of Tchaikovsky, performed live by the members of the Vancouver Opera Orchestra. Running for five performances only from December 17 to 20, 2026, the critically-acclaimed production promises an unforgettable celebration of artistry, imagination and the magic of the holiday season for over 12,000 spectators this year.

Now in its 16th year, Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker* continues to enchant audiences of all ages, welcoming generations of families who return each December alongside those discovering the beloved ballet for the first time. Continuing to evolve while honouring the timeless appeal of the holiday classic, the production is staged by Emmy Award-winning British Columbian choreographer Anna-Marie Holmes, and transports audiences into Clara's dreamlike world of swirling snowflakes, mischievous mice, dazzling costumes and the enchanting Land of Sweets.

This year's production welcomes English National Ballet Principal Dancers Emma Hawes and Aitor Arrieta, making their Vancouver debut as the Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier Prince. They will be joined by distinguished guest artists from the National Ballet of China, including Haowen Lu as the Snow King, Yinuo Liu as the Snow Queen and Haoyu Cao as the *Nutcracker* Prince.

"For 16 years, Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker* has been a cherished part of Vancouver's holiday season, bringing families together and introducing new generations to the magic of ballet," said Chan Hon Goh, C.M., D.Litt, Executive Producer of Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker*. "What makes this production so special is the opportunity to bring renowned international artists together with emerging artists from across British Columbia, all sharing the same stage and passion for storytelling through dance. It's incredibly rewarding to see this homegrown tradition continue to grow and evolve while creating lasting memories for both our performers and audiences."

A Global Cast with Local Roots

Beyond its international guest artists, Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker* is a remarkable celebration of British Columbia's dance community. This year's cast features more than 200 performers, ranging in age from six to 77, representing 26 dance organizations across the province. Dancers from countries including Canada, the United States, China, Japan, Brazil, Panama, Singapore, Mexico, and England come together to bring the production to life.

The scale of the production is matched by the dedication behind the scenes. Following spring auditions and early fall casting, rehearsals began in mid-September, with more than 445 hours of combined rehearsals leading up to opening night. Senior dancers can use 15 to 20 pairs of individually fitted and customized pointe shoes throughout the season, while even the youngest performers tackle intricate choreography requiring extraordinary musicality, coordination and precision.

For many young dancers, the opportunity to share the stage with internationally-renowned principal artists is a defining experience, reflecting Goh Ballet's longstanding commitment to nurturing the next generation of performers.

The Magic Begins Before the Curtain Rises

This year's production extends the holiday experience beyond the stage with a collection of complimentary lobby activities designed to immerse audiences in the world of *The Nutcracker*. Guests can enjoy live performances by *The Nutcracker* Choir, explore elaborate photo installations featuring the Snow Queen's sleigh and Sugar Plum Fair's canopy, and browse a festive boutique offering collectible ornaments, books, autographed pointe shows and exclusive jewellery created for the production by Official Jeweller Lao Feng Xiang Jewelry, including a *Nutcracker* pendant.

Young ticket holders aged four to seven can also participate in interactive pre-show ballet experiences led by Goh Ballet faculty and beloved characters from the production. No previous dance experience is required, although advanced registration is necessary and spaces are limited.

For audiences seeking an elevated experience, the Goh Ballet *Nutcracker* VIP Experience offers premier orchestra seating, exclusive access to the Oakridge Park VIP Lounge, pre-show and intermission receptions, festive refreshments, cast photo opportunities and special keepsakes. The experience culminates in a guided backstage tour and onstage meet-and-greet following the performance.

Performance Details

Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker*, presented by RBC
December 17-20, 2026
Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver

The new show times for the 2026 season are as follows:

- Thursday, December 17 at 7:00 p.m.
- Friday, December 18 at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, December 19 at 2:00 p.m.
- Saturday, December 19 at 7:00 p.m.
- Sunday, December 20 at 2:00 p.m.

Tickets: $66.70+

Tickets and Information: GohNutcracker.com

Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker* is proudly presented by RBC, with the generous support of RBC Royal Bank, Oakridge Park, Snow Scene and VIP Lounge Sponsor; Lao Feng Xiang Jewelery, Official Jeweller; and Hyatt Downtown and Sutton Place Vancouver, Official Hotels.

Quotes

"I am so happy to be in Canada for the first time and to make my debut with Goh Ballet," said Aitor Arrieta, Lead Principal Dancer at English National Ballet. "*The Nutcracker* is such a special holiday tradition, and performing for Canadian audiences is very exciting for me. I can't wait to get on stage and share this wonderful experience with everyone."

'I am thrilled to be returning to Canada to perform as a guest with Goh Ballet in *The Nutcracker*," said Emma Hawes, Lead Principal Dancer at English National Ballet. "Canada is where my professional journey began, and being invited to guest in this production by fellow National Ballet of Canada alumni, Chan Hon Goh, is very special. I am looking forward to dancing alongside the Goh Ballet dancers and sharing the magic of Anna-Marie Holmes' beautiful production."

"Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker* brings our community together through the power of dance, uniting emerging talent and accomplished artists on one stage," said Martin Thibodeau, Regional President, British Columbia, RBC. "At RBC, we are proud to support this cherished Vancouver tradition that celebrates artistic excellence, creates meaningful opportunities for dancers and connects generations through the performing arts."

About Goh Ballet Canada
A distinguished presence in Canadian ballet since 1978, Goh Ballet Canada is internationally recognized for its commitment to artistic excellence, innovation and the advancement of classical ballet. Under the leadership of Chan Hon Goh, C.M., D.Litt., former Principal Dancer of The National Ballet of Canada, the organization continues to honour its rich heritage while expanding its artistic reach and influence.

With a performance history spanning three continents and alumni represented in leading ballet companies worldwide, Goh Ballet Canada brings together exceptional training, acclaimed productions and international collaborations. Through its dedication to nurturing exceptional

talent and enriching the cultural landscape, it continues to contribute to the vitality and future of ballet in Canada and beyond.

Social Media:
Instagram: @gohballet
Facebook: gohballetcanada

About RBC, Presenting Sponsor for Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker*
Royal Bank of Canada is a global financial institution with a purpose-driven, principles-led approach to delivering leading performance. Our success comes from the 105,000+ employees who leverage their imaginations and insights to bring our vision, values and strategy to life so we can help our clients thrive and communities prosper. As Canada's biggest bank and one of the largest in the world, based on market capitalization, we have a diversified business model with a focus on innovation and providing exceptional experiences to our more than 19 million clients in Canada, the U.S. and 27 other countries. Learn more at rbc.com.

We are proud to support a broad range of community initiatives through donations, community investments and employee volunteer activities. See how at rbc.com/peopleandplanet.

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