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NUTCRACKER RECEIVES A NEW LOOK

Houston Ballet's logo for The Nutcracker receives a new look

HOUSTON, TEXAS [May 2016] Houston Ballet, America's fifth largest ballet company, unveiled the first phase of a marketing plan for Artistic Director Stanton Welch's new production of *The Nutcracker* which premieres on November 25, 2016. To build upon the anticipation and excitement surrounding the upcoming production Houston Ballet's marketing team has devised a unique three-phase brand campaign to introduce audiences to the new look and feel of the ballet.

As the company continues to build and create *The Nutcracker* in the coming months, the new brand campaign will show the logo for the ballet transforming and growing in three phases. For the first phase, a simple sketch of the Nutcracker, the ballet's namesake, will appear. In the second phase the sketch will become more detailed and embellished until it appears as a fully finished illustration in the marketing campaign's third, and final, phase. The icon illustration for *The Nutcracker* was created by the ballet's designer Tim Goodchild and will appear on all marketing and advertising collateral.

"We saw an opportunity to market *The Nutcracker* in way that's different and exciting," said Christian Brown, Houston Ballet's Director of Marketing and PR. "This campaign gives us a chance to showcase the extraordinary design work by Mr. Goodchild and build on the sense of anticipation surrounding the production. Our hope is that the Houston community will journey with us as we create the show and see the evolution of logo as a reflection of that progress."

Mr. Goodchild is an acclaimed British designer who has designed for stage, television, and film. He is a three time Laurence Olivier Award-winner and has designed over 75 productions for London's West End theatre, and over 80 productions internationally. In 1988, he made theatre history by designing the first Anglo-Soviet production of a ballet: *Swan Lake*. He also designed the ballet *A Simple Man* for BBC2, which won the 1987 BAFTA Award. Also for BBC2, he designed the musical *The Look of Love*, directed by Dame Gillian Lynne, and was costume designer for the film *The Little Prince*. He has designed productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company, the New Shakespeare Company, Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, English National Opera, Sydney Opera House, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, amongst others.

The Nutcracker has a special place in Houston Ballet's repertory as the first full-length work to enter Houston Ballet's repertoire in a staging by Frederic Franklin, featuring scenery and costumes by the English designer Peter Farmer. The company gave six performances of *The Nutcracker* in 1972 at Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, and has danced the work each December without fail. In 1976, Houston Ballet presented the production with revised choreography by the company's new artistic director Ben Stevenson. In 1987, a new production with designs by Desmond Heeley, lighting by Duane Schuler, and choreography by Mr. Stevenson was unveiled to a glowing critical response. In 2015 Houston Ballet bid farewell to Mr. Stevenson's beloved production after 29 years and will premiere its new version of *The Nutcracker* by Mr. Welch in November 2016.

Houston Ballet's production of The Nutcracker generously sponsored by United Airlines, Houston Methodist, ConocoPhillips, Bank of America, Shell Oil Company, Apache Corporation, Baker Botts L.L.P., and Macy's.

About Houston Ballet

Houston Ballet is America's fifth largest ballet company, an ensemble of 57 dancers with an annual budget of \$28.5 million and an endowment of just over \$69 million (as of September 2015).

Stanton Welch serves as artistic director of Houston Ballet. He has raised the level of the company's classical technique and commissioned many new works from prominent dance makers. James Nelson serves as the administrative leader of the company, assuming the position of executive director of Houston Ballet in February 2012 after serving as the company's general manager for over a decade.

Houston Ballet has toured extensively both nationally and internationally. The company has appeared in London at Sadler's Wells, at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, Ottawa, in six cities in Spain, in Montréal, at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., in New York at City Center and The Joyce Theater, and in Paris at Théâtre des Champs Elysées.

For more information on Houston Ballet, visit www.houstonballet.org.

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