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Lydon to Narrate Nutcracker

By Lou Fancher



Stacey Yuen - Sugar Plum Fairy Photo provided

Center on Dec. 11 and 12 at 7:00 P.M. and on Dec. 12 and 13th at 2:00 P.M. Ticket information is at CAPA's website, www.capadance.net, where you can download a ticket form. You can also call CAPA's manager at 707-738-6548.

It's no coincidence that CAPA, the California Academy of Performing Arts located in Moraga, is run by two veterans. Joan Borcher, artistic director and veteran in the field of dance, and Doyle Borcher, a former commanding officer of one of this country's largest nuclear aircraft carriers, know how to get the troops up and moving. Good thing, because they are about to present their annual Narrated Nutcracker, this year on the Campolindo High School stage, and the logistics are considerable. There are 160 performers, four midweek school shows, four general audience performances, half a dozen choreographers, a growing Christmas tree . . . not to mention Kate Lydon, guest narrator and New York City dance celebrity.

Lydon, a former ballerina with the San Francisco Ballet (SFB), has a strong connection to both CAPA and the Nutcracker. "I'm her home teacher," Borcher says, understating the powerful role a skilled first teacher has in the life of a young dancer. The pride comes out as she describes her student's illustrious career: dancing Clara for two seasons with SFB, being selected by Baryshnikov for special training in New York-the list goes on. "She's a luminary in the dance world," Borcher concludes.

Fortunately, Lydon's generosity to the field did not end when she retired from dancing. Now the Editor in Chief of Dance Spirit magazine, she easily agreed to Borcher's request to narrate this year's Nutcracker. It's an important component, providing explanation for young audience members and those unfamiliar with the ballet's fantastic plot. And because the role does not require on-stage interaction with the dancers, Lydon is able to rehearse in New York. Her first "dress rehearsal" will be during the opening school matinee.

It's refreshing to discover "firsts" in CAPA's seasonal production. The school has been in operation for 29 years: meaning dozens of teachers have trained hundreds of dancers who have danced thousands of hours. It would be easier to spin out the same old song and dance, or even, to close up shop and head for Hawaii. "Not gonna happen," says Borcher immediately. She and her partner have just signed a new ten-year lease to the studios in the Rheem Valley Center and there's no thought of stopping now. Especially with a Nutcracker to produce and the next Kate Lydon to discover and inspire.

The Nutcracker is being performed at the Campolindo Performing Arts Center on Dec. 11 and 12 at 7:00 P.M. and on Dec. 12 and 13th at 2:00 P.M. Ticket information is at CAPA's website, www.capadance.net.



Kate Lydon

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