

Hi Parents,

For those of you new to ABA, the ballet world, the audition world or the Nutcracker we thought we would send out this email to everyone as many of you are asking the same questions. Some of them we can answer and some of them we can't.

Important note: ACB's 2017 Nutcracker performances will be held at the Castro Valley Center for the Arts, 19501 Redwood Road, Castro Valley, CA, 94546. The performance dates are Friday 12/22 at 7pm, and Saturday 12/23 at 2 & 7pm.

The Nutcracker is produced every year by **Alameda Civic Ballet (ACB)** which is an affiliate non profit 501(c) 3 performing arts organization to Alameda Ballet Academy (ABA). All audition fees, performance fees etc should be made payable to **ACB** and **not included** with ABA tuition or dancewear payments.

The audition is meant to be a fun educational experience to teach all involved how to audition, as it is a skill that is part of the performing arts world and needs to be practiced just like anything else. We gear the difficulty and seriousness of the audition to the age level so they don't come away from it thinking it is a big scary monster to be avoided but something they are confident they can handle.

For the most part everyone who auditions gets invited to participate in The Nutcracker. Many of the younger students have just started ballet so for them the experience is more about learning how to act in a rehearsal, backstage and on the stage. Their choreography is simple and their time onstage is limited as that is all they can handle at their age. No matter what they do, they steal the show as they are so cute! For the younger dancers as long as they can demonstrate at the audition that they can listen, follow basic directions, not be disruptive and coordinate age appropriate movements then we will find a part for them. This is where it gets a little tricky as not all students develop at the same rate. We can't cast by class or age, we have to cast by ability. Sometimes it works out that an entire class ends up being in one section but sometimes not, and that is the whole point of the audition.

I can't tell you what role your child will have, how much time they will be onstage or exactly when their rehearsals will be as that is the point of the audition. After the audition we take all the information we have gathered from everyone who auditioned and put the puzzle pieces together to make the best cast we can. Then we notify you of the casting and the rehearsal schedule. From there you either attend the mandatory parent meeting, sign the performance contract and pay the performance fee or you respectfully decline. There are literally hundreds of things we have to take into consideration to come up with a well-balanced cast that works both on and offstage. Putting on a performance like this is really about the big picture, it is a team effort for everyone involved and a great learning experience for every age level.

Is the audition mandatory: Yes. If for some reason you absolutely can't make the audition please email the office at admin@alamedaballet.com with the completed attached audition form and pay the audition fee. First priority will be given to those who

attend the auditions. Then we will do our best to cast those unable to attend the audition.

Where is the audition: 1402 Park Street, Alameda.

What is the audition fee: \$10 cash or check made out to **ACB (Alameda Civic Ballet)**, or \$12 if paying by credit card. Please do not combine with ABA tuition or dancewear.

What to wear: what they wear for ballet class. If they don't already take class at ABA, then anything they can move freely in.

Can I get the audition form and fill it out ahead of time: Yes, please. It can be downloaded from the website. We will have paper copies at the studio in case you forget it.

What can we expect at the audition: When you arrive either pick up an audition form or turn your already completed one in. Your child will be given a number to pin to their leotard and then we may take a picture of the dancer with their number to refer to later. They will then get measured by the wardrobe department and wait until their audition time. Their group will then be called into the studio where they will be given steps from various age appropriate parts to see which they do best. They will then be released to their parents at the listed time.

Do I need to stay for the duration of the audition time: No and we request that you please leave and come back at pick up time as the lobby can only hold so many people. If your child is having anxiety or separation issues that day you are more than welcome to stay nearby in case they need you. Please know that if your child is melting down that day, IT'S OKAY! They are children and some days are like that especially when they are excited. We have lots of experience with this and will do our best to help them through it or give them another chance.

Will I be able to watch the audition: Sorry, No.

When will I know what the rehearsal schedule is: You will be given a rehearsal schedule as well as mandatory dress and theater rehearsal dates at the audition when you check in. The rehearsals are about **1hr** and are either Saturday evenings or Sundays 9:30am - 7pm depending on the role. We always keep in mind that our younger dancers need to get home at a reasonable hour. Rehearsals are every weekend starting 10/7 until the performance, with Thanksgiving weekend 11/25 & 11/26 off. There are a total of 10 rehearsals, including the dress rehearsal at the studio, before going to the theater.

When will I know what part my child has been cast in: We will send the casting out by email and post it on the lobby bulletin board by 5pm on Tuesday, October 3rd.

Mandatory Parent Meeting @ 1402 Park St: Friday, Oct 6th 6:30-7:30pm - Childcare will be provided. This is where you submit performances contracts and fees. It is also where we go over all the other info not listed in this email and answer all of your questions.

Performance Fees: (these prices are subject to change):

Company Members - Ballet 6 - \$260

Apprentices - Ballet 5 - \$185

ABA Students or dancers accepted by audition - \$125

Sibling Discount - **20% discount on the 2nd child** (NOT off the total owed)

Performance Contract: Being that there are only 9 rehearsals until we go to the theater, you and your child will be asked to sign a performance contract agreeing to attend all studio rehearsals and mandatory theater rehearsals. We understand that illness happens and important family functions have been already scheduled. Please list any known conflicts in the conflict calendar in the performance agreement so that they may be taken into consideration and excused. **All rehearsals after Thanksgiving, including dress and and theater rehearsals, are mandatory.**

Very, very Important! Volunteer Hours: We request that each family volunteer for one 4-hour shift. Also, please stay tuned . . . we may make a few changes to the volunteer shifts / sign-up program this year, since Castro Valley Center for the Arts mandates a 10:1 child:adult ratio at their facility, at all times. Your help is crucial for the rehearsals and performances to run smoothly!

I know for those of you new to this that all this information can seem a little scary but really IT'S A BLAST AND YOU WILL BE AMAZED WHEN YOU SEE YOUR CHILD ONSTAGE!

Just ask someone who has done it before, and they will help you through it.

We hope to see you at the audition!