

# *The Nutcracker by the Cuban National Ballet*

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Havana, December 17 (RHC) -- The Cuban National Ballet has announced a Nutcracker season at Havana's Grand Theater for four weekends. The company's performances of the most popular classic worldwide at the end of the year will be held on the 20th, 21st, 22nd, 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th of December, as well as on January 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12. The ballet is a version by late ballet legend and former company director Alicia Alonso.

The Cuban ensemble's shows include the performances of deputy artistic director and prima ballerina Viengsay Valdés, premier dancers Grettel Morejón, Anette Delgado, Sadaise Arencibia, Dani Hernández, Rafael Quenedit, principals Adrián Sánchez, Chanel Cabrera, Claudia García and Adrián Sánchez in the leading roles. Chavela Riera, Diego Tápanes, Katherine Ochoa, Alejandro Olivera, Narciso Medina, among other artists, will also be in main roles.

A famous 19th century fantasy tale, the Nutcracker and the King of Mice, is the basis of a ballet dealing with a girl's fascination for a nutcracker that she receives as a Christmas gift. The world premiere took place at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, on December 17, 1892. Many of the symbols and rites of Western Christmas served as a pretext for German writer Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann and Russian choreographer Lev Ivanov to give free reign to their imagination on the basis of the dream of a girl that includes soldiers, mice, snowflakes, flowers and fairies.

Based on all previous ones, Alonso created her own version for the Cuban National Ballet in 1998. The famous Nutcracker pas deux of the Sugar Plum Fairy was, for decades, an important piece in the repertoire of Alonso, who first performed it in 1945, when she was part of New York's Ballet Theater, currently American Ballet Theater (ABT).

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