

 NASHVILLE
BALLET

NICK MULLIKIN, Artistic Director

NASHVILLE'S NUTCRACKER

Nashville's Nutcracker Educator's Guide



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ABOUT THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR NASHVILLE'S NUTCRACKER

This guide is designed to enhance your performance experience by connecting our presentation to the classroom. You will find pre- and post-performance discussion topics designed to guide students to interpret the performance as they watch. You will also find suggested lesson plans and activities that meet the academic standards set forth by the State of Tennessee. Each of these lesson plans can be modified as you see fit to accommodate students in pre-K through 4th grade.

We hope you find this guide helpful in creating a well-rounded experience for you and your students. More importantly, we hope it creates and fosters a lifelong passion and enthusiasm for the arts in your students.

THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE BALLET

Many Nashvillians don't know the rich history of our community. After all, the "it" city is a place of now; and many think this is a recent development. But Nashville has long been a place of progress, forward motion, and ambition. As far back as the late 19th century, Nashville embraced ideas, invention, and re-invention with passion and fervor. Nothing exemplifies this more than the 1897 Tennessee Centennial Exposition. Conceived by Nashville businessmen as a celebration of Tennessee's 100th year as a state, the Exposition aimed to put the city on the map, and it did just that with almost 2 million people attending.

And the things they saw!

The newest of the new in inventions, education, and art, as well as people and cultures from all over the world—plus a little bit of magic and a lot of fun.

In 2008, Artistic Director of Nashville Ballet, Paul Vasterling, set his new production of the classic ballet *The Nutcracker* right down in the middle of this wondrous time in our city's history.

Imagine if you were a young person in 1897 and you attended the Exposition—your world would have been lit up by mind-blowing exhibits, architectural feats like the full-scale replica of the Parthenon, cutting-edge technologies like Thomas Edison's motion pictures, and more people than you'd ever seen before. For you, colors would have become more intense, lights more *sparkling*, imaginations more alive, and *love, more real*. With exposure to the world, the heroine of this story, Clara Stahlbaum, becomes *more*—more open, more curious, and in the end, more herself.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls: this is the world of *Nashville's Nutcracker*.

***Nashville's Nutcracker* will air on NewsChannel 5 this December. Tune in to watch at one of the following times:**

**Friday, Dec. 18, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. CST
on NewsChannel 5**

**Thursday, Dec. 24, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. CST
on NewsChannel5+**

**Friday, Dec. 25, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. CST
on NewsChannel 5**



ARTISTIC CREDITS

Concept, Choreography, and
Story Interpretation By

Paul Vasterling

Music By

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Act II Grand Pas de Deux

Choreography By

Lev Ivanov

Costumes Designed By

Campbell Baird

Scenery Design By

Shigeru Yaji

Lighting Design By

Scott Leathers

OVERALL STANDARDS MET BY VIEWING NASHVILLE BALLET'S PERFORMANCE OF NASHVILLE'S NUTCRACKER

Nashville's Nutcracker

Recommended for Grades K-12

English Language Arts for Grade K-12

Reading. KID. 1, 2, 3

Social Studies: Grades K-12

Culture

Geography

TN History Standard 43

Dance: Grades K-12

Connect 1

Perform 3.A

Respond 1, 2.A

Music: Grades K-12

Respond 2

Theater: Grades K-12

Connect 1

Perform 1.A

Respond 1, 2, 3

Visual Arts: Grades K-12

Respond 1



ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (May 7, 1840 – Nov. 6, 1893) is considered to be the most popular Russian composer. Born in Votkinsk, Russia and raised in St. Petersburg, Tchaikovsky displayed an affinity for music very early in life. He attempted his first recorded musical composition at the age of four and began studying piano at the age of five. While initially supportive of his musical talent and education, his parents did not want him to pursue a career as a musician and expected him to be a civil servant. While he proved to be a good student and was able to secure employment as a clerk at the Ministry of Justice, Tchaikovsky's father realized his son's musical vocation and allowed him to study at St. Petersburg Conservatory, where Tchaikovsky decided to dedicate his life to music. After graduating, he moved to Moscow to teach at the Russian Musical Society, now known as the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory, where he embarked on his remarkable musical career.

As a composer during the Romantic period, Tchaikovsky had a vast creative range and his music is characterized by its expressive and beautiful melodies. His varied compositions included symphonies, operas, and ballets, as well as music for solo piano and chamber ensembles. He is the composer of the most recognized stories in ballet such as *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. To this day, Tchaikovsky's music is the soundtrack to the holiday season. *The Nutcracker*, one of his most popular scores, is heard in TV commercials, played in shopping centers, and is also featured in Nashville Ballet's production of *Nashville's Nutcracker*.

For more about Tchaikovsky and listening samples visit, classicsforkids.com and/or classicsforkids.com/composers/composer_profile.php?id=75.

ABOUT THE TENNESSEE CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION

The Tennessee Centennial and International Exposition was held in Nashville in 1897 as a celebration of Tennessee's 100th anniversary of statehood. Concocted by Nashville businessmen hoping to showcase the city as a place of progress and ambition, the Exposition attracted over 2 million people from all over the world and featured exhibitions on culture, industry, agriculture, commerce, education, and transportation. The actual Tennessee Centennial was the year of 1896, but the festivities were so grand that the exposition did not take place until one year later (running from May to Oct.). Held at what we now know as Centennial Park, the Exposition spread over 200 acres with magnificent gardens, a man-made lake, and various neo-classical buildings like the full-scale model of the Parthenon of ancient Greece. A centerpiece intended to house the Fine Arts Building, the Parthenon replica was built exactly to scale using plaster and wood and became a symbol of Nashville's claim as the "Athens of the South." The Parthenon replica would be rebuilt of concrete in 1920 to become the permanent landmark that we recognize today.

The Exposition highlighted the technological advances brought about by the machine age. The latest technological advances in commerce, agriculture, machinery, and transportation were showcased next to their soon-to-be obsolete counterparts. Mules and man-powered tools were being replaced with steam-powered machinery and gasoline-powered engines. Electric lights lit the pathways and buildings sending the message of what was soon to come.

Other exhibits focused on the arts and culture of Tennessee with special attention to the progress of women and racial segregation. Female speakers and advocates for racial progress were invited to speak at the Exposition even as certain days were marked for "blacks only" to attend. Rounding out the experience were exciting rides and entertainment for families to enjoy. Cost of entry to the Exposition was only 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children.

Doyle, Don H (2020, Oct. 22). Tennessee Centennial Exposition. Tennessee Encyclopedia, tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/tennessee-centennial-exposition/.

Wikipedia (2020, Oct. 22) Tennessee Centennial International Exposition, Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee_Centennial_and_International_Exposition.



PRE-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION TOPICS AND RESEARCH FOR NASHVILLE'S NUTCRACKER

Anchor Standards
Met By This activity:

Dance Foundations
Music Foundations
Visual Art

Music Foundations
Respond 1, 2, 3
Respond 1, 2, 3
Respond 1, 2

Visual Art
Connect 1, 2
Connect 1, 2
Connect 2



READ OUT LOUD TO CLASS

Why is it that we can all see the same work of art, but walk away with different interpretations and emotions? What informs each person's opinions of the same work of art happens long before we've even seen the actual artwork. Our unique life experiences, our culture, and our history influence and mold the way we view, interpret, and understand art and the world around us. Noticing the details in a work of art and being aware of the way we respond to it is what gives meaning to the work of art. Answering the question 'Why did I respond to it this way?' is what gives us our own unique connection to the art.

The questions below are to help you interpret *Nashville's Nutcracker* for yourself. Keep these questions tucked away in your mind as you watch the performance and try to remain aware of how you feel as you watch. You may not have an answer for every question but notice what elements of the performance stand out to you, and then answer the question, why?

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

What do the costumes look like (color, fit, texture, etc)?

How do the dancers use their bodies to tell the story and portray emotion?

How does their movement reflect the music, the character, the mood or, all three?

How do the dancers use the performance space (all of the stage or just a portion)?

What levels do the dancers use (low, middle, high)?

Are the dancers always visible?

Is there a set (backdrop, props, lighting)?

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What do you hear (music, narrator, sounds, instruments)?

How does the music help tell the story?

How does the music enhance the dancer's movements (increased emotion, etc.)?

HOW DOES THE PERFORMANCE MAKE YOU FEEL?

Does the music make you feel anything? How? Why?

How did the dancers make you feel?

How do the colors of the costume and set make you feel?

Are you sad or happy with the way the performance ends?

POST-PERFORMANCE REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

This activity can be a written assignment or a class discussion.

Anchor Standards Met By This Activity

Dance

Respond 1, 2.A, 3
Connect 1.A, 1.B, 2

General Music

Respond 1
Respond 2
Respond 3

Directions to teacher: Separate the board into three columns. Write “Notice” at the top of the first column, “Wonder” at the top of the second column, and “Think” at the top of the third column. Ask students the following questions. Write their responses to the following questions in the corresponding section. Bring attention to how diverse the answers and responses are after seeing the same performance.

What did you notice (see, hear, feel) during the performance?

What did the performance make you wonder (if you could speak to the dancers/ choreographer/ musicians, what would you ask them)?

What did the performance make you think (what did you learn, understand better, get confused by)?

WRITE A LIBRETTO

Writing Standards Met By This Activity

Text Types and Protocol
Standard 3 W .TTP .3

Inspired by an actual event in Nashville’s history, Nashville Ballet Artistic Director Paul Vasterling re-imagined the classic story of *The Nutcracker* by setting it at the 1897 Tennessee Centennial and International Exposition. After months of research on this historical event, the next step in creating a ballet is the writing of a libretto, a text or the storyline of a ballet.

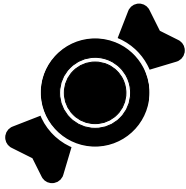
Provide students with a list of familiar fictional stories. Next, provide students with a list of events in the present day or past. Have students select one option from each column. As a class, review both lists to familiarize everyone with the stories and events OR have students research the historical event individually. Using the story and the event of their choice, have students write a narrative scene OR complete the story using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and clear event sequences to re-imagine the fictional story.

Have the students present their librettos with new titles to the class.

AROUND THE WORLD ACTIVITY

In *Nashville's Nutcracker*, the main character, Clara, visits the Tennessee Centennial and International Exposition with her Uncle Drosselmeyer. While at the Exposition, Clara is entranced by the artists, exhibitionists, sweets, and toys from all over the world. In fact, it is at the Exposition that Clara first sees the famed Nutcracker. Her uncle later gifts the Nutcracker to her as a surprise. These encounters at the Exposition manifests in Clara's dream, as seen in Act II of *Nashville's Nutcracker*.

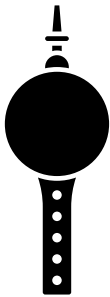
Take a look at the items below. Draw a line from the item to the country it originated from.



Bon Bon



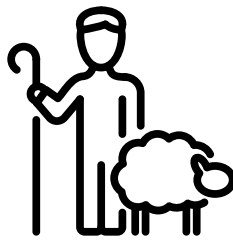
Lion Dance



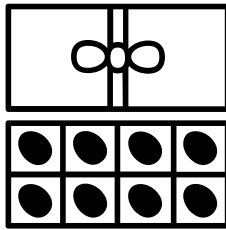
Pungi (Flute)



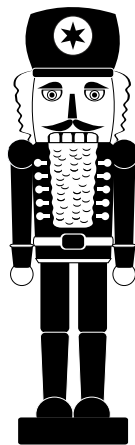
Matryoshka Nesting Dolls



Shepherd



Chocolates



Nutcracker



Switzerland



Russia



China



France



Germany



India



Spain

BE A PRESENTER AT THE TENNESSEE CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION

**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity**

Social Studies
Tennessee in the Civil War Era (1850s–
1900) – Standard 5. 43–46



The year is 1897 and people from all over the world are making their way to the Tennessee Centennial and International Exposition. In groups, have students research what was happening in the state of Tennessee from 1896–1897 in one of the following areas: commerce, agriculture, machinery, transportation, art, culture, the women’s progressive movement, racial segregation (no two groups should have the same topic). Inform students that they will be presenters at the Tennessee Centennial and International Exposition. All presentations will need to include an explanation of efforts, development, and impact respective to their specific topic.

TCHAIKOVSKY AND ROMANTICISM

Anchor Standards Met By This Activity

Music
Connect 2

Tchaikovsky was a composer during a time in the arts known as the Romantic period. Romanticism affected more than just music—it was an intellectual movement that spread to literature and art that emphasized emotion and the individual more than ever before. Within music, everything began to be more dramatic and to grow in complexity. Orchestra sizes increased, harmonies became more intricate, there was a greater range of dynamics (how loud or soft a piece of music is), and a larger range in pitch (how high or low a sound is). One specific type of music that became popular during this period is program music. Program music is instrumental music that is meant to convey a story. When listening to the *The Nutcracker* score, you are able to hear how Tchaikovsky was influenced by this trend in program music and pulled from various elements of Romanticism to create distinct melodies that further capture the story being told.

The Nutcracker score has come to be famously intertwined with the holiday season. Whether you realize it or not, you have probably heard at least a portion of the music from *The Nutcracker*. Today, we are going to take a closer look at what could be considered the four most iconic pieces of music from *The Nutcracker*: *March*, *Trepak (Russian Dance)*, *Waltz of the Flowers*, and *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*. We will look at different elements of each of these pieces and analyze what gives them their distinct sound.

LISTENING PARTY ACTIVITIES

Necessary materials: Recordings *March*, *Trepak (Russian Dance)*, *Waltz of the Flowers*, and *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* from *The Nutcracker Suite* by Tchaikovsky

SUGGESTED RECORDINGS:

Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker* (Standard Version) found on Spotify

Act 1: March - [youtube.com/watch?v=9t1AeJm7XFO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t1AeJm7XFO)

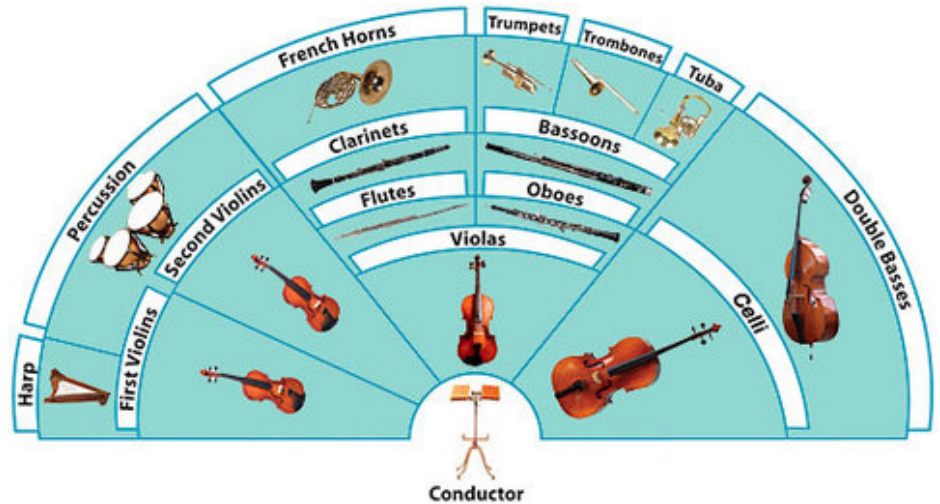
Trepak (Russian Dance) - [youtube.com/watch?v=TmQjhwsPRDE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmQjhwsPRDE)

Waltz of the Flowers - [youtube.com/watch?v=VUF9g9V-Ang](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUF9g9V-Ang)

Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy - [youtube.com/watch?v=B9zRToy-mwk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9zRToy-mwk)

ELEMENTS TO LISTEN FOR TO HELP ANALYZE:

Instrumentation—Instrumentation refers to the instruments that are used to make up the ensemble that plays the music. *The Nutcracker* uses an orchestra, a large ensemble made up of four main sections: **strings** (violin, viola, cello, bass), **woodwinds** (clarinet, flute, bassoon, oboe), **brass** (french horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba) and **percussion**.



Tempo—Tempo refers to how fast or slow the music is played. Here are a few words that can be used to describe the tempo of a piece:

Lento - really slow

Adagio - slow

Andante - at a walking pace, moderate

Allegro - fast

Presto - really fast

Dynamics—Dynamics refer to how loud or soft the music is. Here are some words that can be used to describe the dynamics of a piece:

Pianissimo (pp) - really soft

Piano (p) - soft

Mezzo Piano (mp) - somewhat soft

Mezzo Forte (mf) - somewhat loud

Forte (f) - loud

Fortissimo (ff) - really loud

ACTIVITY #1—BASIC CONCEPTS

Elements explored: tempo and dynamics

After reviewing the “Elements to Listen for to Help Analyze” with the class, have the students experience tempo and dynamics through singing and walking.

1. **Tempo:** Have the students start out walking/moving at a leisurely pace (*andante*). From there, direct them to move/walk around at different tempo by calling out a new tempo.

Example: *Allegro*—students begin to power walk,
Lento—walking in slow motion.

2. **Dynamics:** Next, seated or standing still, decide on a song that the class may know collectively (*Mary Had a Little Lamb, Rain, Rain, Go Away, Happy Birthday, etc.*). Have them start singing at piano. From there, direct them or let them experiment with different dynamics, getting really loud and really soft.

3. **Challenge:** Direct students on a combination of both tempo and dynamics. Mix and match with multiple combinations.

Example: Sing at *Forte* while moving at *Lento*, sing at *Pianissimo* while moving at *Allegro*.

Tip: Have the words that describe tempo and dynamics, with their definitions, on display where students can easily reference during the activity.

ACTIVITY #2—ACT 1: MARCH

Elements explored: instrumentation, dynamics, tempo, maintaining a steady rhythm

Read aloud to students:

The main melody, or theme, in this piece is played by the trumpets and french horns, which are found in the **brass** section. However, the theme is interrupted by a secondary melody played by the **strings**.

- Have the students listen through. Have them raise their left hand when the brass are playing the theme, and their right hand when the strings are playing their melody. Have them describe what dynamics they heard.
- Have the students march in place with the music. What tempo do they think the piece is moving at?

ACTIVITY #3—TREPAK (RUSSIAN DANCE)

Elements explored - instrumentation, dynamics, tempo, reading rhythms

Read aloud to students:

The theme in *Trepak* is played by the **string** section. However, the percussion also helps create a driving force to propel the music forward. When we listen through the piece, pay attention to the theme played by the strings and notice how the percussion interjects, bringing excitement and energy to the main theme. The two complement one another.

- What tempo would you use to describe this piece? Do the dynamics change, or stay the same throughout?
- Become a member of the percussion section! Have the students clap out the following rhythm along with the music:



Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity

Music
Respond 2
Respond 3

ACTIVITY #4—WALTZ OF THE FLOWERS

Elements explored - instrumentation, analyzing how the melody transfers between instruments

Read aloud to students:

This piece introduces the **harp**—a large instrument with 47 strings that uses foot pedals and is plucked when played. At the beginning of the piece, you can hear the harp moving in and out while the **woodwinds** play the introduction. Eventually the music opens up to a harp cadenza. A **cadenza** is a solo played in the middle of a larger piece of work. After the dream like cadenza, we enter the **waltz**, a type of dance music that is played in three, emphasizing the first beat.

Starting after the cadenza, notice how the melody begins in the **brass**, then the **woodwinds** interject, leading into the **strings** taking over the melody. There is a lot of transferring leading lines between sections of the orchestra in this piece.

- Imagine it as a conversation between the different sections. What is the conversation you imagine they are having?

**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity**

Music
Respond 2
Respond 3



ACTIVITY #5—DANCE OF THE SUGAR PLUM FAIRY

Elements explored: instrumentation, dynamics, tempo

Read aloud to students:

Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy makes use of a special instrument called the **celesta**. Invented in 1886 by Auguste Victor Mustel, the celesta is a small keyboard instrument, like a piano, that produces sound by hitting small pieces of metal within the instrument that resonate like bells. Because of the small build and limited volume of the celesta, it is not often featured in orchestral pieces.

- Listen to how the plucked strings create the foundation, while the celesta and woodwinds play off one another, again similar to a conversation. What dynamics do you hear? What tempo would you describe this music? What kind of mood or emotion does the celesta create?

NASHVILLE'S NUTCRACKER WORD SEARCH

U V A S T E R L I N G D X F S V O N J Q
 A V O E L Z E B V V F B E P N F E P J F
 B K C Q F Q A S H E L B Y B O T T O M S
 R E L E S D W Z P S H F K Y W F M D M H
 A B L N N U Y K W C N M E S K A J K O F
 D A W L U T G S Z S P O Y S I P H X U U
 E F X K E T E A Q P P C W F N W G X S Y
 W R V S O M C N R L A M E Q G E K Q E S
 D I D S Y T E R N P F R K E U Z W A K P
 R T I R Y C S A A I L L T H I E K K I W
 O Z N F O K A H D C A U R H O Q E F N C
 P G P C I S L Z S E K L M B E L R N G I
 F L U L W K S T U O M E P F M N N N C E
 A Z P A S A F E S B N A R A A T O Z L V
 I G H R A J U L L Y R Z N P R I Q N S B
 R L W A M C C E H M J O T S R K R F V B
 Y H Q T B Y X W Y O E E B I I I Q Y W D
 H Z P X V X R Y D K J Y N P X O N I F Z
 Z Z K E V G Z R W Y R T E W L R N C L U
 K Z Q C U B L Z A R N M E R U A J W E J

Belle Meade Mansion

Nutcracker Prince

Centennial Park

Parthenon

Clara

Shelby Bottoms

Dew Drop Fairy

Snow King

Drosselmeyer

Snow Queen

Fritz

Sugar Plum Fairy

Mouse King

Vasterling

It takes **six semi-trucks** to bring Nashville's Nutcracker sets and props to TPAC.

There are **200 total costumes**, including the youth cast.

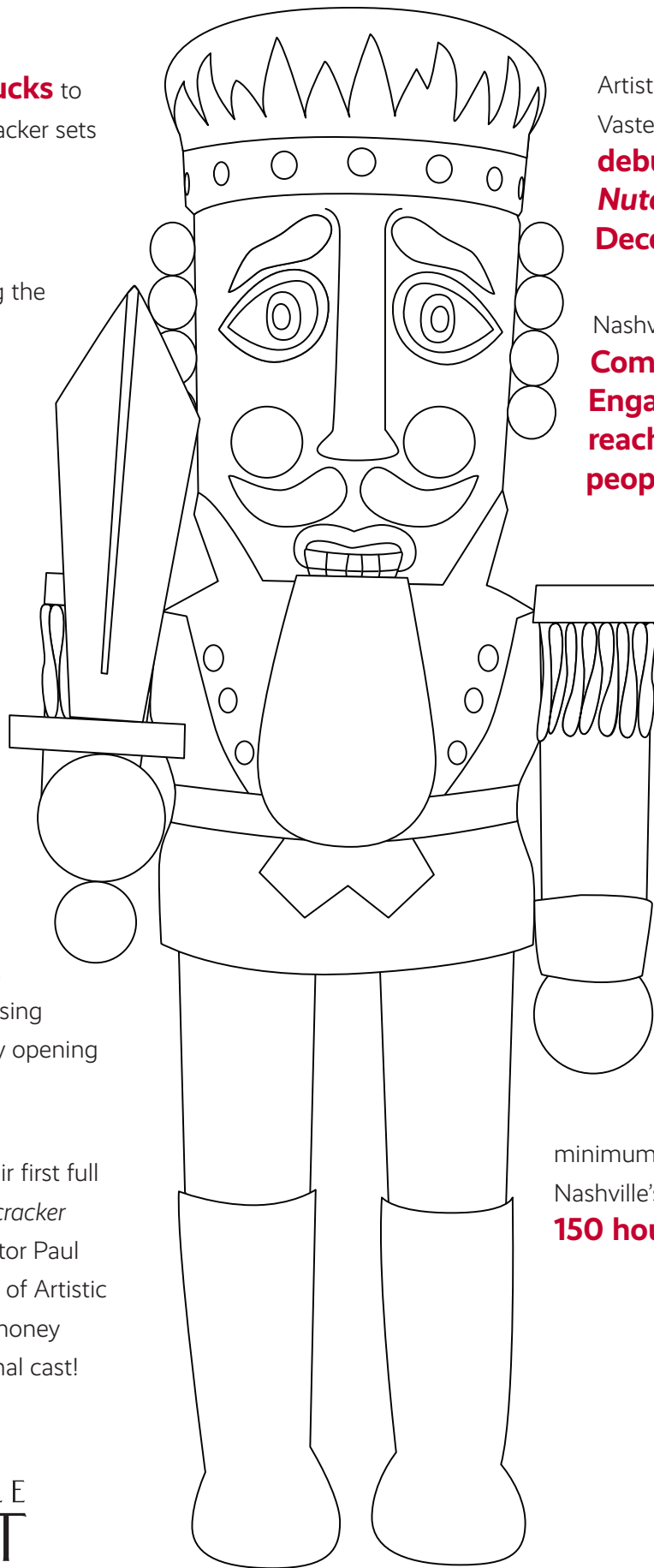
250 children make up the youth cast.

Kids come from 13 different counties, and as far away as Bowling Green, KY and as far as Perry and Coffee County in Middle TN.

Rehearsals for the youth cast begin in October.

They have been rehearsing for over two months by opening night!

Nashville Ballet did their first full production of *The Nutcracker* in **1989**. Artistic Director Paul Vasterling and Director of Artistic Operations Sharyn Mahoney were among that original cast!



Artistic Director Paul Vasterling created and **debuted Nashville's Nutcracker in December of 2008.**

Nashville Ballet's **Community Engagement program reaches over 20,000 people annually.**

Nashville Ballet's **Community Engagement program performs over 200 shows** a year throughout Nashville and surrounding counties.

The company rehearses for six hours a day, five days a week for a minimum of six weeks for Nashville's Nutcracker —that's **150 hours of rehearsal!**