

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Vacaville Ballet opens 20th annual holiday show

VACAVILLE — The Vacaville Ballet Company's 20th annual holiday production features on twist on the traditional "Nutcracker."

"The Nightmare Before Nutcracker" takes cues from Tim Burton's cult classic film, "The Nightmare Before Christmas."

The plot centers on the collision of sugars and shadows. The Queen of Nightmares wants to bring the cordials and delights from the Land of Sweet Dreams to the spooky Land of Nightmares. She has become bored with her dark kingdom filled with vampires, ghosts and witches after a visit to the Land of Sweet Dreams.

The Queen of Sweet Dreams helps the Queen of Nightmares find herself along a journey to find Christmas cheer.

The audience will see the traditions of the classic in the first act. Those traditions will be flipped in the second act with an edgier approach, complemented by a Rat Pack-style band.

Principal dancers are Grace Baxter and Sarah DiMichele. The show includes a cast of 73. The show is directed by Vacaville Ballet company director Cassandra Kamakeeaina, a 2001 graduate of Will C. Wood High School.

She came up with the idea in 2013 while looking for an updated take on the Tchaikovsky classic. "I wanted something fresh, exciting and fun," she told the Daily Republic in 2013.

Kamakeeaina, who grew up in the Vacaville Ballet Company, took over the group when artistic director Heidi LuMaye resigned after 17 years to move out of state.

She served as assistant artistic director under LuMaye for seven years and came home on college breaks to dance in "The Nutcracker."

Earlier this year, the Vacaville Ballet Company established its new home within the Royal School of Ballet in downtown Vacaville.

An opening night gala precedes Friday's performance. An alumni reception is planned after Saturday's show.

Maginnis-Honey, Amy. "Vacaville Ballet opens 20th annual holiday show." *Daily Republic*. [Fairfield-Suisun]. 12 December 2014. B1.