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**Press Release**

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Warrenton, Virginia

The nonprofit Centre Performing Arts Company announces that internationally renowned dancers Cory Stearns and Hee Seo of American Ballet Theatre (ABT) will be dancing the roles of the Nutcracker Prince and the Sugar Plum Fairy in its full-*Nutcracker* production on December 4 and 5 at Fauquier High school in Warrenton, Virginia.

This is the third *Nutcracker* production with the Centre Performing Arts Company that Stearns has performed, but the first for his fellow principal dancer Hee Seo. The rest of the roles in the production are student-cast, a rare opportunity for young dancers to work closely with top professional dancers—during rehearsals and performances in Warrenton, Virginia, and with private coaching in New York City. Stearns is a guest faculty teacher for the Lasley Centre for the Performing Arts in Warrenton.

Stearns, who has been a principal dancer with ABT since 2011, received his early dance training in New York at the Seiskaya Ballet, and then went on to study at the Royal Ballet School in London, receiving honors and the Dame Ruth Railton Award for excellence in dance upon graduation. Stearns won the 2009 Erik Bruhn Prize for best male dancer, and his work continues to be acclaimed around the world. *Ballet Herald* describes his performance in a recent production of *Giselle*, with “His dancing is all together so elegant, gravity-defying, and expressive.” Stearns frequently partners with Seo, and from that same *Giselle* production, Sarah

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Kaufmann of the *Washington Post* wrote, “Seo set the tone right away with her supple precision, a combination of effortless technical command and musical shading.” Seo has been principal dancer with ABT since 2012. She received her early training in Seoul, South Korea, before studying in the United States and Stuttgart, Germany. She is the recipient of the 2003 Prix de Lausanne Award and the 2003 Grand Prix at the Youth American Grand Prix in New York.

Following last year’s pandemic that shut down live performances around the world, the Centre Performing Arts Company is thrilled to bring the *Nutcracker* tradition back to live audiences. This year, the Centre Performing Arts Company is excited to offer 2 in-person, fully staged, professional level, *Nutcracker* matinee performances that are abundant in glorious costumes, magical staging and production, and stunning dancers. Other dancers in the cast are local teachers and students, including Mark Rubin (Alvin Ailey and Joffrey) as Dr. Drosselmeyer, Lily Knisely as Clara, Noah Kane-Haspel as Fritz, Kendall Ritter as the Naughty Mouse, Robert Celentano as the Mouse King, Abigail Kane-Haspel as the Snow Queen, and Lindsey Johnson as the Flower soloist.

Performances are both matinees, December 4 and 5 at 4:00 pm at Fauquier High School, 705 Waterloo Rd, Warrenton, Virginia. Reserved tickets are on sale at <https://www.etix.com/ticket/o/9056/centreperformingartscompany>. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 (12 and under), and free for children under 2. Interviews and photographs are available, please contact Kalie Lasley. For more information go to CentreCompany.org















