



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: RACHEL LONG**  
**PHONE: 303.466.5685 ex. 1004**  
**EMAIL: [rlong@ccdance.org](mailto:rlong@ccdance.org)**

**COLORADO CONSERVATORY OF DANCE RETURNS TO THE STAGE TO PRESENT A SENSORY-FRIENDLY VERSION OF  
"THE NUTCRACKER"**

*Professional production features internationally renowned guest stars, offers affordable tickets for families with Special Needs*

**(DENVER, CO, October 18)** Colorado Conservatory of Dance (CCD) is proud to return to the stage and present a special version of the traditional, Denver Metro's family favorite ballet, Sill-TerHar Motors Presents, Colorado Conservatory of Dance, *The Nutcracker* for people with special and sensory needs on Friday, December 17 at 6:30 PM at the Performing Arts Complex at Pinnacle Charter School, 1001 W. 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Denver. Colorado Conservatory of Dance is in its eleventh year of offering *Dance Expressions* – a program which uses dance to build critical developmental skills and physical strength and flexibility for children with special needs ranging from Cerebral Palsy to Down Syndrome. Building on their expertise with this core program, CCD has developed a theatre experience for people with special needs. Thanks to generous contributions from the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) and other supporters, CCD is pleased to offer free or deeply discounted admissions to the production.

CCD is proud to say that we were the first organization in Colorado to adapt traditional performances to allow patrons of all abilities to participate in this annual holiday tradition. We are very eager to bring back to the stage this beloved tradition for our patrons to enjoy this 6th annual special performance. It is important to note that CCD will implement Covid-19 safety protocols for our performances to protect both our patrons and our dancers. Please visit our [website](#) for more detailed information.

CCD's production of *The Nutcracker* boasts gorgeous sets and costumes, stunning choreography, and professional guest artists from around the country. During this annual experience created especially for people with special needs, CCD will alter the normal house rules, fostering the opportunity for families with a special needs family member to feel welcomed in a theatre setting. The performance will feel and look the same as our performances which are open to the general public, but will allow for reactions that would normally be seen as distracting in a typical theatre experience.

- Sound levels are adjusted to a moderate, consistent level to avoid unpredictable loud sounds.
- House lights will be left up to avoid total darkness.
- Guests of Honor are encouraged to bring manipulatives into the theatre.
- Guests of Honor may react to the story on the stage in the way that feels right to them. They may stand up, walk around, take breaks, etc. as needed.
- Seating is limited to no more than half the house (300 seats) to ensure each audience member has adequate room.

The 2021 production features guest stars Sharon Wehner, former Principal from Colorado Ballet, and Gavin Hounslow of Boulder Ballet, who perform the roles of Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier. One audience member of our Sensory-Friendly production has said, *"This event has become an annual family tradition that we look forward to every year. My ten year old daughter Eve has a complex genetic disorder. She is profoundly deaf, has low-vision, has global developmental disabilities, autism, and an intellectual disability. She is able to stand right in front of the stage (for visual access), dance/move, and she has complete freedom just to exist as the beautiful person she is without constraints or judgment. There is truly no other event like this where my entire family can be comfortable and truly feel and be welcomed and accepted for who we are."*

CCD's mission statement, "we unleash individual potential and invigorate community through dance," manifests itself through its production of *The Nutcracker*, as it features over 50 student cast members. Some of these students are attending the conservatory on either merit-based, financial based, or crisis relief scholarships. In fact, CCD provides nearly \$90,000 of tuition assistance per year as part of its belief that dance should be an enriching and fulfilling experience that is accessible to everyone, regardless of age, ability, aspiration, or socio-economic status.

## AT A GLANCE

- WHAT:** A Sensory-Friendly Nutcracker with international guest stars Sharon Wehner and Gavin Hounslow
- WHO:** Colorado Conservatory of Dance
- WHEN:** December 17 at 6:30 PM
- WHERE:** Performing Arts Complex at Pinnacle Charter School  
1001 W. 84<sup>th</sup> Ave., Denver, CO 80260  
(West of I-25 at 84<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Huron St.)  
Ample FREE parking!
- TICKETS:** \$10 general admission | Guest of Honor FREE  
To order tickets please call 303.466.5685
- HEALTH & SAFETY:** <https://ccdance.org/ticket-policy-and-venues/>

## WHO WE ARE:

Colorado Conservatory of Dance (CCD) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization located in Broomfield County. Since 1992, CCD's dance education includes a thriving after-school program, **MOVE2Learn** residency programs for Title 1 elementary schools, acclaimed **Anti-Bullying Ballet** tours, scholarship programs, and Sensory-Friendly performances. Serving over 22,000 students annually, CCD seeks to heighten education, deepen self-esteem, and further the art of dance in a fun and engaging way. CCD makes an important impact for our community and enriches arts education.

Colorado Conservatory of Dance is an anti-racist organization who supports BBIPOC, AAPI, and LGBTQIA+ peoples, as well as all people who have historically been marginalized, oppressed, or underrepresented in our society. We believe in respect for all perspectives, in the value of creativity, in the power of art, and in treating other humans with dignity and kindness. We will not be silent. We will use our platform to end discrimination in the arts.

At CCD, we believe every student deserves the absolute best dance education, regardless of age, ability, aspiration, or socio-economic status. Our program is designed to give students the highest quality dance education in both classic and contemporary styles in a friendly and warm environment. Our syllabus is designed to build strength and versatility in every dancer, allowing each dancer to work in the healthiest, most kinesthetically aware way. At CCD, we truly believe that dance is for everyone and that art can foster community, create positive influence, and inspire the individual, and our faculty, staff, and families reflect every aspect of that belief.

Dance Expressions is an inclusive program with a specifically designed adaptive curriculum, which provides children of ALL abilities with a therapeutic dance experience. Students are given the tools for a successful exploration of dance while being in a safe environment. Students will gain increased body awareness, develop fundamental motor skills, improve self-esteem, concentration and focus, and have fun expressing themselves creatively.

## MISSION STATEMENT:

At Colorado Conservatory of Dance, we unleash individual potential and invigorate community through dance.

**For exclusive photo and interview opportunities with Artistic Director Julia Wilkinson Manley or cast members, e-mail or call CCD Communications Coordinator Rachel Long at [rlong@ccdance.org](mailto:rlong@ccdance.org) or 303.466.5685.**