

For Immediate Release
November 1997

"The IMAX⁰ Nutcracker" Springs To Life On the Giant-Screen This Holiday Season

***Oscar[®]-Winning IMAX Film Technology And Contemporary Treatment
Combine To Create A Fresh, New Holiday Classic***

No holiday season would be complete without *The Nutcracker*, E.T.A. Hoffmann's classic tale of a young girl who stumbles into an enchanted kingdom ruled by a wooden prince. Now Imax Corporation brings a fresh, modern version of the classic to the giant IMAX screen - - ***The IMAX Nutcracker***.

Filmed using Imax's award-winning large-format technology, this is *The Nutcracker* as it's never been seen before -- a contemporary, non-ballet adaptation of one of the world's most famous fairy tales, transformed into a colorful extravaganza. Filmed on location and set in present-day England, the film is scheduled for release in IMAX and IMAX 3D this November 26th to the more than 150 theatres worldwide in the IMAX system network.

This ground-breaking film moves Imax from its traditional documentary arena to narrative dramas set against music. With a cast of 150 performers, 150 sumptuous costumes and nine complex sets, ***The IMAX Nutcracker*** is the Company's biggest, most elaborate production ever with intricately-detailed sets that the audience will feel they are actually in, and richly-costumed characters they will feel they can touch.

The stellar cast includes actress Miriam Margolyes (*The Age of Innocence*), and introduces Lotte Johnson playing Clara, the young protagonist, and Benjamin Hall

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as the Nutcracker Prince. The beloved toys, dolls, mice, puppets and acrobats who have delighted generations are brought to life by a troupe of performing artists drawn from the world of circus, mime and street theatre.

Each is dressed like the original artifact, down to the last button and bow. There is no computer animation here, but living, breathing tumblers, jugglers, puppeteers, stilt walkers, and trapeze artists. To complete the illusion of Clara's life spinning out of control, much of the furniture, tables, chairs, even the piano, were built four times life-size.

Christine Edzard, internationally celebrated for her award-winning work as writer, director and costume designer, wrote and directed ***The IMAX Nutcracker***, which she describes as "a piece of living theatre which proves Hoffmann's point: fantasy can often be more real than reality." Because of the style of the film, Edzard staffed the production with experts from the theatre and performing arts, rather than conventional cinema. Edzard is best known for her adaptation of the Charles Dickens classic *Little Dorrit*, starring Sir Alec Guinness, which garnered an Oscar nomination for Best Screenplay in 1988, and for her award-winning adaptation of the classic *Tales of Beatrix Potter*.

The IMAX Nutcracker is Imax's first venture into classic stories. "We feel this is a further step towards opening a new dimension in storytelling using the large format palette," says Andrew Gellis, the Company's Senior Vice President, Film. "I would like to think we have produced an evergreen family film. A tradition if you like, which children, their parents, even their grandparents, will look out for year after year."

Bringing the story's colorful tale to life is a cast of renowned actors and talented newcomers. Miriam Margolyes, whose film credits include her role as Mrs. Mingott in *The Age of Innocence* and the voice of "Fly" the dog in the film *Babe*, stars as Sugar Plum, the palace pastry cook. Heathcote Williams, noted British author, actor (*Orlando*, *Looking For Richard*) and playwright (currently working with Al Pacino) portrays

the eccentric "Uncle" Drosselmeier. Harriet Thorpe, who portrays Clara's mother, has worked for such eminent film directors as Mike Leigh, James Ivory and Franco Zeffirelli.

The young stars include fourteen-year-old London student Benjamin Hall, discovered in the U.S. singing the lead in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, playing the title role. Eight-year-old Londoner Lotte Johnson plays Clara, the little girl through whose dreaming eyes the story unfolds. And 23-year-old Spanish ballerina Tamara Rojo dances the production's sole ballet performance, the famed "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy," adapted from the Bolshoi's most recent production.

Tchaikovsky's unforgettable score is performed by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra - - an orchestra hailed as one of England's finest. Adding a distinctive modern flavor to the film is Black Ebony, London's premier steel pan orchestra, performing the overture.

Carrying through the element of fantasy are costumes designed by Edzard in collaboration with French designer Claudie Gastine. Edzard is renowned worldwide for her incredibly detailed, colorful and realistic designs for such films as *Sense and Sensibility* and *Jane Eyre*. Both the sets and costumes create a perspective and depth never before seen on stage or film. "What I hope we have come up with is something which appeals not only to children, but to the child who is in every adult." Edzard explains.

Founded in 1967, Imax Corporation has consistently delivered the world's premier cinematic experiences. In 1997, Imax was awarded the sole Oscar® for Scientific and Technical Achievement by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The award recognized Imax's innovation in creating the world's best theatrical projection as well as Imax's acceptance as part of the entertainment mainstream. As of June 30, 1997, there were more than 150 permanent IMAX theatre systems in 22 countries, with a backlog of more than 50 theatre systems scheduled to open during the next few years.

Imax has forged strategic alliances and relationships with some of the largest corporations in the world, including Sony Corporation, Caesars World (an ITT Corporation subsidiary), Circus Circus Enterprises, Ogden Corporation, Famous Players Inc. (a subsidiary of Viacom Inc.) and Regal Cinemas, Inc. Over 500 million people have seen an IMAX presentation since the medium premiered in 1970. In 1996 alone, more than 60 million people worldwide enjoyed the IMAX experience.

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Contact:

SYNOPSIS

The family are off on their annual holiday outing to see “Uncle” Drosselmeier (HEATHCOTE WILLIAMS); Mother (HARRIET THORPE), Father (PATRICK PEARSON), ten-year-old Frederick (DANIEL WYLIE) and his eight-year-old sister Clara (LOTTE JOHNSON).

Frederick finds the yearly ritual boring beyond belief and never stops complaining as they trudge through the wintry streets of London. But for Clara it is an annual treat. She is fascinated by Drosselmeier, a dry, grised, old man who could have been carved from wood. He keeps the best chocolate cake in London -- and has an almost magical gift for knowing Clara’s thoughts before she knows them herself. The fact that he wears a monocle serves only to heighten her fascination.

His home is the stuff of which dreams are made: a vast treasure house crammed to overflowing with the toys of times past. Room opens upon room like Santa’s cavern to reveal the countless playthings and gadgets Drosselmeier has collected from around the world. Dolls of all nations, jack-in-the-boxes, music boxes, toy soldiers and stilt-walkers. Chinese tumblers, gingerbread men, marionettes and automata. Miniature play houses and puppets fight for space with Mr. Punch and wife Judy on the shelf they share with Harlequin and his lady, Columbine.

In one corner is an exquisite castle made from spun sugar and housed in a glass case -- to protect it from mice, explains Drosselmeier. “You can’t be too careful about mice,” he adds darkly.

The family members are given their presents and Clara receives a wooden nutcracker in the shape of a Hussar. His carved head has black beads for eyes and the jaws -- which can crack the toughest nut, are operated by lifting the tail of his brightly colored tunic.

Frederick continues to complain on the way back home and fight with his sister. As they near Round Pond he suddenly snatches Nutcracker in a fit of temper and throws him onto the frozen water.

Half running, half skating, Clara sets off after him, ignoring her parents' screams that the ice is not safe. Clara begins to tumble uncontrollably amidst a flurry of icy pond water and snow.

The snow clears and Clara finds herself with Nutcracker in a warmly lit room, a room both familiar and strange. It could be her home. Then again it could be Uncle Drosselmeier's because all his toys are there. But the Christmas tree stands in a different corner. Even stranger, Clara finds she is wearing a long Victorian nightdress topped by a lacy woolen shawl.

The grandfather clock strikes midnight and as if on cue, the mice appear. In the hundreds. From everywhere; the leaves of books, beneath the piano and through the skirting boards. From chair legs and Christmas parcels. Atop the clock Drosselmeier cackles yet again: "You can't be too careful of mice...!"

The floorboards creak and splinter. There is a roar. The rug shreds apart to reveal the monstrous Mouse King; a fearful rodent with seven heads, each wearing a spiky, golden crown.

Nutcracker lifts Clara to safety on the impossibly high table before turning to face the chaos and, as the hissing mice advance to pillage everything in sight, Nutcracker summons his troops.

The fight rages this way and that in a welter of flying fur, wood chips, Christmas tree ornaments and chocolates. Just as it seems Nutcracker has won the day, the mice rally and surround him as the Mouse King moves in ominously.

Clara comes to the rescue by throwing her shawl over the Mouse King. Blinded and enmeshed like a fish in a net, he turns and twists himself into nothingness until there is no more than a heap of shredded wool on the floor...

The battle is over and with it has gone the spell of "Spite, Anger, Hate and Envy" which has plagued Nutcracker's family for so long. Nutcracker is revealed as he really is -- a handsome prince (BENJAMIN HALL) with finely chiseled features and beautiful dark eyes.

As a reward for all she has done, the Prince takes Clara to his Sugar Palace. It is remarkably like the model she saw at Uncle Drosselmeier's; a wondrous place of glistening sugar. Their transport is a gilded gondola steered by pages through enchanted misty waters

Upon their arrival, they are welcomed with joyous pomp and circumstance by acrobats mounted on butterflies, spinning tops in rainbow colors, satin-clad monkeys playing flutes. And there to greet them is Sugar Plum (MIRIAM MARGOLYES) who has preserved and protected the palace from the ravaging mice during the Prince's long absence.

She is the palace pastry cook, but her specialty is spinning and sculpting in sugar. As she demonstrates her art, familiar figures appear. Chinese tumblers, peg dolls, Harlequin and Punch, toy soldiers, acrobats and clowns. All push closer to watch her create the Sugar Fairy (TAMARA ROJO). The dainty little figure starts to dance as the cook beats time with a spoon.

The Nutcracker Prince and Clara join the dance. So do the toys and the snowflakes. Abruptly, the music stops and Clara is alone. The Prince has gone. Only the toys and snowflakes continue to spin around her in silence.

She opens her eyes. Her family and Drosselmeier look down at her as she sits in her father's chair, wrapped in a thick blanket. She calls for Nutcracker and tries to describe her adventure.

"A bad dream," says her mother. "A winter chill, perhaps," suggests her father. "I bet she was making it all up," says her brother.

Only Clara knows it really happened. And perhaps Drosselmeier. . .

THE PRODUCTION

Like every Sands Films production, it all began along the Thames at Rotherhithe where two 19th century warehouses have been converted into London's most picturesque film studio.

Christine Edzard and her producer husband Richard Goodwin founded Sands in 1975, naming it after the Goodwins, an infamous sand bank off the Kent coast which still reveals its wrecks at low tide. Today, in rambling workshops, sewing rooms and ateliers fashioned from old ships' timbers, Sands undertakes every aspect of filmmaking; costumes to construction, editing to eating, miniatures to model building.

Run like a creative collective, a permanent staff of dressmakers, carpenters, artists and miniaturists interchange skills as required, boasting "there is nothing we can't do". They service not only their own films, but outside productions. Particular point of pride is the vast wardrobe department, which specializes in 19th century costumes -- more than 3,000 of them -- designed by Edzard.

Among countless outside productions they have dressed are *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, *Jane Eyre*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Oxar and Lucinda*. Further afield, their work has been seen in Gerard Depardieu's *Le Colonel Chabert* and *Le Husard sur le Toit*, in addition to such Hollywood productions as Spielberg's *Amistad* and *Beloved* for Walt Disney.

But ***The IMAX Nutcracker***, with its cast of 150 performers, 150 costumes and nine complex sets was the most challenging of them all, say the Sands team. In the weeks leading up to start of shooting, more than 50 extra seamstresses, painters, model-makers and carpenters were brought in to make the date.

As Clara moves from reality to her land of dreams, Drosselmeier's toys and dolls are transformed into living beings through performers recruited from the world of circus, mime and street theatre. Each is dressed like the original artifact, exact to the last button and bow.

To complete the illusion of Clara's life spinning out of scale, much of the furniture, tables, chairs, even the piano, were built four times life size in the Rotherhithe workshops.

All sets were ferried across the Thames to Three Mills Island at Bromley-by-Bow, east London. Once a flourishing 19th century flour mill, Three Mills is now a bustling studio complex where most of the interiors were shot.

Ingenious use was made of a giant turn-table, 35 yards in diameter. It was here that the battle between the Prince and the Mouse King took place, and its revolving stage provided a perfect illusion, as the Prince and Clara glide in a gilded gondola to the Sugar Palace.

The largest set was the Palace itself. A towering edifice reaching the sound stage roof, it was molded in the Rotherhithe workshops from 3,000 square feet of translucent plastic, then "sugar-sprayed"-- much of it by the hands-on director herself.

Virtually the entire cast filled the palace set for the film's most colorful scene--the arrival of the Prince and Clara. Included were cooks and scullions, an orchestra of musical monkeys, tumblers, jugglers and acrobats, stilt-walkers, puppeteers and plate-spinners, acrobats and daring young men on the flying trapeze and, last but not least, Sugar Plum and the dancing Sugar Fairy.

Exteriors of Drosselmeier's house were shot in the east London suburb of Blackheath. Interiors were built on Sands' own sound stage at Rotherhithe and crammed from floor to ceiling with every conceivable toy all of which were made in-house: Dolls and their houses, marionettes, jack-in-the-box, performing animals, drums and toy trumpets, automata, dioramas, kaleidoscopes, and puppets, Punch and Judy, Harlequin and Columbine.

Finding the performers who would bring all this hardware to life was perceived as a problem but turned out to be one of the easier aspects of the production.

Says associate producer Celia Bannerman: "We had no idea there was such a wealth of talented young performers out there in British circus and street shows. But once

the word was out they never stopped coming: acrobats and aerialists, dancers, movement artists and stilt walkers. "Many came from the circus schools in Bristol and the City of London, but most were recommended by friends who already had a part in the show. There's an amazing self-help camaraderie amongst these youngsters which is wonderful to see."

Some got into the film by accident. Twenty-one year-old Lorraine "Loz" Samuels, for example, joined the film in the costume department. When it was discovered she was also a trained aerialist, she was given a part in the film and can be seen swinging spectacularly high in the Sugar Palace.

More than 100 performing artists complemented the principal cast and each had a story to tell:

- Tim Hamilton -- mouse and scullion -- is a dancer and movement artist who broke a leg, literally, in a motorcycle accident. Never one to sit around, he spent the many hours learning to spin on his head like a top. He, too, was there to welcome the Prince, spinning on his head... like a top.
- Tony Phipps, who stands in for Nutcracker in battle on land and water, was a male nurse. Disenchanted with the National Health Service, he ran away to join the circus school at Bristol. He came to London to live, and now makes his living as an acrobat.
- It was Jamie Ward's girlfriend, a professional performer, who taught her man to walk ten-feet tall...on stilts. They broke up, but Jamie (Harlequin) carried on walking. So did his girlfriend. They meet sometimes at conventions and circuses, pick up where they left off and argue...ten feet from the ground.

Eight years ago, the He family--mice and scullions--left China as circus tumblers. Mom and Dad never have learned English too well, but their son Henry, who attends an English school, speaks it perfectly and negotiates all their deals. Henry is seven.

As the cast grew so did the crew. Wardrobe Supervisor Marion Weise needed 32 dressers to costume the performers on "fight days". No less pushed was chief make-up artist Pamela Meager who headed a staff of ten.

Their most arduous task was in preparing Michael Aaron Peth to come to life as The Chair Acrobat. It took more than an hour to tease his hair and apply the playing card symbols which cover his face.

Because of the style of the film, director Edzard frequently staffed the production with experts from the theatre and performing arts, rather than conventional cinema.

Caroline Sharman, for example, Edzard's able first assistant, is an opera director who has already staged several theatre productions. Presently, she is working on a project which will popularize opera by taking small groups to sing in the streets and shopping malls.

French musician Michel Sanvoisin, who directs Arts Antica, the Paris-based ensemble specializing in the Elizabethan and baroque music, has arranged Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite" for the film. He has worked with Christine Edzard on almost all her pictures and has just completed arranging for a major French movie, *Le Bossu*.

Throughout the production of ***The IMAX Nutcracker***, concert pianist and accompanist Richard Pearce was on hand to play Sanvoisin's arrangement. From the resulting cue sheets, the full score was performed and recorded by the 86-piece Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO).

The orchestra, regarded as one of the finest in England, was formed in the Dorset coastal resort more than 100 years ago. They celebrated their centenary with a triumphal tour of the United States in 1994. Under their principal conductor Yakov Kreisberg, they were invited back for a second visit in 1997.

Among distinguished guest artists who have appeared with the BSO are Yehudi Menuhin, Kiri Te Kanawa and Mstislav Rostropovich. Equally distinguished conductors include Charles Groves, Paavo Berglund and Andrew Litton, the first American to take over the baton at Bournemouth.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR --- E.T.A. HOFFMANN

Regarded as the arch priest of German romanticism and fantasy, Ernst Theodore Wilhelm ("Amadeus") Hoffmann was born in Konigsberg in 1776. He trained as a lawyer, but had an erratic, alcoholic career until 1816 when he was appointed to the German Supreme Court in a senior position. His real interests, however, were in writing and music, both as a composer and influential critic. His most important opera, *Undone*, was the precursor for works by Weber and Wagner, and a remarkable essay on Mozart's *Don Giovanni* established him as a serious critic.

But for the most part, Hoffmann's wit and sense of the absurd bubbled over in such measure that his work was frequently dismissed as undisciplined, wild and fantastic. His short stories, including "The Nutcracker And The Mouse King", which inspired the ballet, were published in compilations which bore titles like "Tales of Fantasy", "Night Stories" and "Elixir of the Devils". Three of them, however, provided the basis for such operas as Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* and Delibes' *Coppelia*.

"The Nutcracker" ballet was first performed in St. Petersburg's Maryinska Theatre in 1892. Since then, it has been regularly performed, usually at Christmas, by every major ballet company in the world. Interpreters over the years include Markova, Alberta Grant, Nureyev and among its famed choreographers is George Balanchine who presented his version at the New York City Ballet in 1954.

Many critics believe Hoffmann based Drosselmeier on himself, and certainly he lived his life between reality and fantasy until it ended as he would have wished--dramatically.

Towards the end of his life he served on a commission investigating treasonable and subversive activities in Prussia. During this time he not only sketched caricatures of members of the commission, but wrote a semi-autobiographical satire of events. Typically, he made no secret of the fact that the characters were based on his humorless Prussian colleagues.

The Secret Service stole the manuscript, took it to Berlin, and it seemed certain Hoffmann himself was going to be prosecuted for subversion. He solved the dilemma in 1822 ... by committing suicide.

THE CAST

MIRIAM MARGOLYES

Sugar Plum

Her career began 35 years ago with the Cambridge Footlight Revue, in which she was the only girl. Since then, she has rarely been absent from the stage, screen, radio or television.

London-born Margolyes now makes her home in Los Angeles. Her work includes roles in Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence*, Lawrence Kasdan's *I Love You To Death*, Kenneth Branagh's *Dead Again* and, most recently as the Nurse in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*.

She was Sarah in Barbra Streisand's *Yentl*, the Matchmaker in the British stage production of *Fiddler on the Roof* and the voice of the dog in Chris Noonan's wildly successful *Babe*.

The IMAX Nutcracker marks the fourth time she has worked with director Christine Edzard. Margolyes won the Hollywood Foreign Press Association's Golden Globe for the role of Flora in *Little Dorrit*, appeared as Lady Isabel in *The Fool* and was Audrey in *As You Like It*.

Her television appearances are countless, and *Blackadder* illustrates her amazing versatility. She appeared in the long running British series as Lady White Adder, the Infanta of Spain -- and Queen Victoria!

Miriam Margolyes was born in Oxford, the only child of middle class Jewish parents. Her father was a doctor and her mother had unfulfilled theatrical ambitions which she passed on to her daughter. After attending grammar school where she was an exceptional music student, Miriam went to Cambridge to read English Literature.

Dr. F.R. Leavis, the eminent literary critic and historian, was her tutor and Charles Dickens her special interest. It was an interest which never went away.

Her one-woman show, *Dickens Women*, was first staged at the Edinburgh Festival and she has presented it in London's West End, Los Angeles, the Sydney Festival, a British Council tour of India and, in 1997, at the Williamstown Festival.

Her first films included Warren Beatty's *Reds* and Mike Newell's *The Awakening*. Among many West End stage appearances are Mrs. Hardcastle in Peter Hall's production of *She Stoops to Conquer*, Vee Talbot in *Orpheus Descending* at the Haymarket Theatre and she was June Buckridge in *The Killing of Sister George*.

HEATHCOTE WILLIAMS

Drosselmeier

Known equally as an actor, author, and prize-winning playwright, Heathcote Williams appears as Drosselmeier, the eccentric "uncle" who opens the door to Clara's dream world with the gift of a wooden nutcracker. As a writer, Williams has been the darling and despair of critics both sides of the Atlantic.

As an actor, his offbeat talents have been seen in such films as Sally Potter's *Orlando* and *The Tango Lesson*; David Leland's *Wish You Were Here* (Emily Lloyd's screen debut), *Stormy Monday* and *The Browning Version*, both for director Mike Figgis.

He was Prospero in Derek Jaman's version of *The Tempest* and the Mad Vagrant in Al Pacino's directorial debut, *Looking for Richard*. He has appeared twice before for Christine Edzard--as The Fire Eater in *The Little Matchgirl*, followed by Dr. Haggage in *Little Dorrit*. Most recently, he portrayed Loacon in Andrei Konchalovsky's film version of Homer's *The Odyssey*.

Williams, who lives in Oxford where he was educated, began his career as a writer and for ten years was associate editor of "Transatlantic Review". He then turned to writing for the theatre.

One of his earliest plays, *AC/DC*, was produced at London's Royal Court where it won The Evening Standard Drama Award in addition to the John Whiting and George Devine Awards. Presented off-Broadway at Brooklyn's Chelsea Theatre, it went on to win a Village Voice Obie Award.

Other plays include *Remember the Truth Dentist*, again for the Royal Court, and two National Theatre productions--*The Immortalist* and *Hancock's Last Half Hour*, which was also staged in New York. His books include "The Speakers"--described by Harold Pinter as "a brilliant piece of reportage"--"Whale nation", "Falling for a Dolphin", "Sacred Elephant" and "Autogeddon", a bleak look at the role of cars in the world today. Among his screenplays is "What The Dickens", a drama documentary starring Ben Cross, which revealed Charles Dickens' little known talent for conjuring tricks. Williams is presently contributing to the screenplay of "The Devil's Advocate" for Al Pacino.

LOTTE JOHNSON

Clara

Star of the show is eight-year-old Lotte Johnson who portrays Clara. It is through her dreaming eyes that the story unfolds...the fight with the seven-headed Mouse King ...the wondrous journey to the Sugar Palace in Candy Kingdom.

Blue-eyed and dark-haired, Lotte was born in London, the second of three children. She has a younger brother, Alfied, and elder sister, Coral.

Her father is film and television director Sandy Johnson known for such top British series as *The Ruth Rendell Mysteries*, *Inspector Morse*, *A Touch of Frost* and *Jonathan Creek*. Lotte's mother, Sheilagh Gilby, was a presenter of such TV shows as *Play School* and *Zig Zag*.

Though many other young hopefuls were up for the part, Lotte was cast just two weeks after she had been auditioned. Says director Christine Edzard: "It took us two weeks to find Little Dorrit, but I think we knew we had found Clara almost from the beginning. Lotte had exactly the look of wonderment and marvel we wanted."

Lotte had only a few days free in the entire shoot and, between takes, followed a rigorous educational schedule set by her chaperone/tutor. Lotte attends private school in West London where she excels at piano and cello. At this time, she is not at all certain whether or not she wants to be an actress.

“At the moment, I want to be a veterinarian,” says animal-loving Lotte who has a particular weakness for guinea pigs. “That’s why my favorites in ***Nutcracker*** are the mice--even though they are the enemy.”

Perhaps it was written in the stars that she would end up in ***Nutcracker***. Four years ago, she and her sister were taken to the Royal Ballet Company's production at the Festival Hall. They insisted on dressing as fairies, complete with white tutus and wands. So eye-catching were they that the professionals on stage were distinctly up-staged when the young couple won a special round of applause from the audience. “Of course, I was much younger then,” says eight-year-old Lotte in all seriousness. “I wouldn't dream of doing it today...it wouldn't be professional.”

BENJAMIN HALL ***The Nutcracker Prince***

Dark-eyed and dark-haired, Benjamin Hall was born in London 14 years ago. Until his voice broke, he was a well-known boy treble, with many recordings and concert appearances to his credit. Following a recommendation from the National Youth Theatre, the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Gian Carlo Menotti chose him for the lead role in the Tennessee Opera House production of *Amahl And The Night Visitors*. The one-act opera, which tells of an invalid boy miraculously cured after a nocturnal visit by the Magi, won rapturous reviews, as did its young star.

Last year, the American Italian composer invited Benjamin to repeat the role in a new production of *Amahl* at the Two Worlds Festival in Spoleto which he had co-founded in 1958. The production was filmed by Christine Edzard, who also designed the costumes and set. When it came to casting the Nutcracker Prince, her thoughts naturally returned to the young boy.

Benjamin recently appeared on stage at the Battersea Arts Centre in London in *The Beast on the Moon*, which dealt with the plight of Armenian refugees in the United States. It was directed by Irina Brook, daughter of distinguished director Peter Brook, and again Benjamin won rave reviews. But despite this early introduction, he has no intentions of becoming an actor, and quietly gets on with his studies at the City of London School. "I would quite like to be a producer, perhaps a director or writer," he says. "But acting? No. Far too much like hard work."

HARRIET THORPE

Mother

Harriet Thorpe, who portrays Clara's mother, is one of Britain's leading actresses; her talent and unusual good looks opening the door to a hugely varied range of roles.

On stage, she was Moira with Anthony Hopkins in the celebrated National Theatre production of David Hare's *Pravda*, and only recently left the role of Madame Thenardier in *Les Miserables* at the Palace Theatre in London.

Other work for the National includes *Long Time Gone*, *Jacobowski And The Colonels* (as Madame Boffier) *Futurists* (Nadezhada Mandlestam) and *The Government Inspector* (Maria). In a recent Shakespearean season at the Regents Park Open Air Theatre, she was seen as Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III* and appeared as Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Away from the theatre, Harriet Thorpe has worked with such leading film directors as Mike Leigh (*Life Is Sweet*), James Ivory (*Maurice*), Hugh Hudson (*Greystoke*) and Franco Zeffirelli chose her to portray Angela in *Toscanini, the Young Maestro*. She is an equally familiar face on British television. Carol in *The Brittas Empire*, she has appeared in almost every top series, including *Goodnight Sweetheart*, *Absolutely Fabulous*, *French and Saunders*, *Fry and Laurie* and *Murder Most Horrid*.

PATRICK PEARSON

Father

Patrick Pearson, who learned his craft early in provincial repertory, highlighted his career with the role of Dundas in Nicholas Hytner's celebrated production of *The Madness of George III* at the National Theatre.

He had previously worked with Hytner in the title role of *Tom Jones* at the Leeds Playhouse, where he was also seen in *School for Wives*. Other work from this period included two productions at the Bristol Old Vic--*Time And The Conways*, *The Duchess of Malfi*--and at the Belgrade, Coventry, he was Orsino in *Twelfth Night*, followed by Frank Hunter in Rattigan's *The Browning Version*.

West End appearances include *A Piece Of My Mind* at the Apollo Theatre and he was Gerald Forbes in Ronald Eyre's production of Priestley's *When We Are Married*, a role he repeated for BBC Television.

He has been seen in almost all Britain's top TV series, among them *Casualty*, *The Bill*, *Lovejoy*, *Goodnight Sweetheart*, *Poldark* and *Pie in the Sky*.

Pearson made his film debut with John Cleese in *Privates on Parade*, the Peter Nichols farce directed by Michael Blakemore. For Sands Films, he made *A Dangerous Man*, directed by Chris Menaul.

DANIEL WYLIE

Frederick

Completing Clara's family is her obnoxious brother Frederick, portrayed by Daniel Wylie, an energetic youngster whose first day of shooting coincided with his twelfth birthday.

Daniel is a friend of Lotte Johnson (they share the same piano teacher). Of the film's three child stars, fair-haired, green-eyed Daniel is the only one who wants to be an actor . . .when he grows up.

The second of three children (he has two sisters), Daniel attends the Chiswick Arts Educational School where conventional play periods are run side-by-side with courses in drama, dance and music.

He has already formed his own pop group, in which he plays drums. Daniel has also danced with the English National Ballet in a provincial tour, followed by a production of *The Nutcracker* at the Festival Hall, appearing as one of the children at Drosselmeier's Christmas party.

TAMARA ROJO

The Sugar Fairy

Born in Montreal to Spanish parents, 23-year-old Tamara Rojo joined the English National Ballet in the summer of 1997 as senior soloist. She has already completed a provincial tour and will dance as Clara this Christmas (1997) in the ENB's production of *The Nutcracker* at London's Coliseum Theatre. The exceptionally beautiful young ballerina trained in Madrid with Karemia Moreno and Victor Ullate, graduating with honors from the Royal Conservatory of Dance and Drama.

She danced for five years with Ullate's "Ballet de la Comunidad de Madrid" before appearing as a guest artist with the Opera de Nice Ballet, the Arena Ballet and Scottish ballet with whom she danced as Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake*.

Tamara went on to dance principal roles in *La Sylphide*, *Les Sylphides*, *Giselle* and *The Nutcracker*. She was Juliet in Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet* and other works in which she appeared include Balanchine's *Theme and Variations* and Massine's *The Three Cornered Hat*.

Among the glittering prizes she has been awarded in her young career is the Gold Medal at the 1994 International Competition in Paris. Two years later, she was voted best dancer of the year at Nervi, Italy.

THE PRODUCTION TEAM

CHRISTINE EDZARD

Director, Writer, Costume/Production Designer

Christine Edzard was born in Paris to parents who were both painters--German-born Dietz Edzard and his Polish wife, Susanne Eisendieck.

Following her graduation with a degree in economics, Edzard learned her early craft in the Paris theatre, as assistant to designers Lila de Nobili and Rostislav Doboujinsky. In Rome, while assisting production designer Emilio Carcano, on Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*, she met English producer Richard Goodwin to whom she is married.

Edzard went on to design productions for various European opera and theatre companies before writing the script of *Tales of Beatrix Potter*. With Doboujinsky, she also designed the costumes and sets. Produced by her husband, the production was choreographed by Frederick Ashton and is still a perennial favorite in England today.

In 1975, she and her husband moved into two abandoned warehouses along the Thames, at Rotherhithe, which they converted into a small film studio and production facility.

Sands Films was born, taking its name from the Goodwin Sands, a dangerous sandbank off the Kent coast. Its first production, written and directed by Edzard, was *Tales From A Flying Trunk*, which featured three Hans Christian Andersen stories—"The Little Match Girl", "The Kitchen" and "Little Ida".

She later wrote and directed the animated film, *The Nightingale*, also based on an Andersen fairy story. Her first feature was *Biddy*, which followed the life of a 19th century English nanny, portrayed by Celia Bannerman.

In 1983, she was joined by the young French filmmaker, Olivier Stockman, who worked as her assistant on *Little Dorrit*, a six-hour, two part adaptation of the Dickens novel. The film opened to enormous acclaim in 1987. Edzard's screenplay won a BAFTA Award, an Academy Award® nomination and the picture was voted Best Film by the Los Angeles Film Critics.

The cast fared equally well. Derek Jacobi won The Evening Standard Award and Miriam Margolyes received a Golden Globe from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. In addition to winning the Best Actor Award at the Berlin International Festival, Alec Guinness was nominated both by BAFTA and the Academy.

Christine Edzard and Olivier Stockman went on to write an original screenplay, *The Fool*, based on the books by Henry Mayhew. Derek Jacobi portrayed the Victorian clerk who led a highly colorful--and questionable--double life.

Meanwhile, the production facilities at Rotherhithe were growing fast and Sands was soon able to offer studio space and services to outside productions. In particular, they built a formidable reputation for the creation of 19th century costumes. Among the productions they have dressed are *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma*, in addition to such Hollywood projects as Steven Spielberg's *Amistad* and Walt Disney's *Beloved*.

Christine Edzard's next production for Sands was an adaptation of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Set in contemporary London's 'cardboard city', James Fox portrayed Jacques and Emma Croft appeared as Rosalind.

In 1992, as a tribute to the 20th anniversary of the *Tales of Beatrix Potter* film, they were asked to re-create the sets and costumes for a stage revival of the ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in London, England. Continuing her non-stop life, Christine Edzard filmed the 1996 Spoleto Festival production of Gian Carlo Menotti's one-act opera *Amahl And The Night Visitors*.

Directly following the completion of ***The IMAX Nutcracker***, Edzard returned to a mammoth project which has occupied much of her life for the previous three years -- a screen adaptation of Thomas Mann's first work, *Buddenbrooks*. The novel examines the

decline and fall of a German family at the turn of the century, and immediately established Mann's reputation when it appeared in 1901.

OLIVIER STOCKMAN

Producer

A protégé of François Truffaut, Olivier Stockman was born in Paris, the son of painter Marc Stockman.

From childhood, film was his passion. At age 12, he started making his own productions on 'Super 8'. The script for his second film owed much to Truffaut's *Day for Night*. Fearing the guillotine, or worse, the young boy wrote to the distinguished director, asking if he could "borrow" the idea. He added he would be willing to pay, but didn't have much money.

Truffaut not only answered the letter sympathetically, but encouraged him to write and direct one Super 8 film a year. Regularly, each Easter, he would review the year's work and offer his constructive criticism.

The friendship lasted until the director's death in 1984, by which time the film bug had well and truly taken hold. Stockman became an official representative of the "Federation Française de Super 8" and two of his films received awards at their annual festival.

He moved to England in 1979. After assorted temporary jobs in the film industry, he joined Sands Films at Rotherhithe, where he was given the opportunity to learn his craft from the ground up. From research to special effects lighting to sound mixing, Stockman did it all before becoming Christine Edzard's assistant and right-hand man.

He helped edit *The Nightingale* and *Biddy*, co-wrote the script for *The Fool* and, in 1983, worked closely with Edzard on her epic adaptation of Dickens' *Little Dorrit*.

With the expansion of Rotherhithe as an outside production facility, he took over the

administration of the studio and has seen it grow into an undisputed centre of film-making excellence.

LORNE ORLEANS

Producer

Lorne Orleans, producer of giant-screen films, was born in Montreal. He majored in Communications at Concordia University, then set about learning his trade, working on music videos, television commercials, movies of the week, features and documentaries.

His first 15/70 production was the 1986 documentary *Beavers*, on which he was given the grand title of Head Animal Wrangler. The experience left him with a fascination for the new format which he has never lost.

For the past ten years he has worked exclusively for Imax Corporation, as production manager, line producer and producer. His credits include *Flowers In The Sky*, the first film shot in the unique IMAX *Magic Carpet*® process and first shown at EXPO '90 in Osaka, and *Mountain Gorilla*, shot on location in Rwanda.

He oversaw post production on *Fires of Kuwait*, which received an Academy Award nomination, produced *Asteroid Adventure*, Imax's first movie ride shot in the revolutionary IMAX *HD* process. He was co-producer on *Whalesong* and co-produced *The Hidden Dimension* which opened in May 1997.

ANDREW GELLIS

Executive Producer

Andrew Gellis joined Imax Corporation as Senior Vice President, Film, in January 1996, following a four-year affiliation with Sony Pictures Entertainment.

During his time at Sony, Gellis worked in its numerous entertainment and technology divisions, where he helped pioneer and advance the company's entry into the large-

format film-making arena. He wrote and produced Sony's highly acclaimed 15/70 3D film *Across the Sea of Time*. In his new role at Imax, Gellis is responsible for developing and supervising the production and distribution of its film product for both the institutional and commercial markets. A Harvard graduate, Gellis began his career at the J. Michael Bloom Agency where he set up the literary departments in New York and Los Angeles.

In addition to serving as a production executive at CBS Films Inc., he was a studio-based producer at 20th Century Fox and headed his own film production company.

NOEL ARCHAMBAULT
Stereographer & Camera Operator

Noel Archambault worked on the NFB production *Transitions* (the first IMAX 3D film) for EXPO '86 in Vancouver, and on *Niagara: Miracles, Myths And Magic*. In 1987, he joined forces with Imax Corporation to further 3D research, and to help design a new IMAX 3D camera. He was stereographer/camera operator for *The Last Buffalo* and *Echoes Of The Sun* -- both premiering at EXPO '90 in Osaka.

As location director and camera operator, Archambault directed portions of the backstage and on-stage shots for *Rolling Stones - At The Max*, and was cameraman on Sony Pictures Classics' *Across The Sea Of Time* and *Wings Of Courage*.

Most recently, Archambault photographed selected sequences of the Academy Award® nominated *Cosmic Voyage*, and was stereographer for *L5: First City In Space*.

**IMAX CORPORATION
AND THE
IMAX® 3D EXPERIENCE™**

3D is simple--yet often impossible to explain, says Director of Stereographic Photography Noel Archambault, a world expert on the subject.

At its simplest, the 3D technology mimics the way we see the real world. Each eye sees a slightly different view of an object and, through "stereopsis", the brain "fuses" the two views into a single 3D image.

The two lenses of the IMAX 3D camera roughly match the distance between the human eyes ("interocular distance") allowing images to be recorded on two separate rolls of 65mm negative film running simultaneously through the camera.

Unlike conventional 35mm, the negative runs horizontally through the gate, permitting 15 perforations per frame. The format, known as IMAX 15/70, creates a frame ten times larger than 35mm and three times bigger than normal 70mm coupled with the unique IMAX projection technology, it does not lose its clarity, even on screens up to eight stories high. So much for the theory. In practice, shooting in 3D can be both onerous and mind-blowingly complicated.

Certain perspectives and points of view have to be individually worked out by computer so that the lenses can be "toed in". And because of the vast picture area to be covered, the additional lighting frequently generates heat which borders on the tropical. To power the production, a 2Kw generator, large enough to light a small town, was brought in.

IMAX 3D Effect via Electronic Liquid-Crystal Shutter Glasses (E3D)

The film is projected at the usual 24 frames per second, shutters on the projector alternating left-and-right-eye images at the rate of 96 times per second. Viewers wear lightweight, cordless headsets in which liquid crystal lenses are triggered by infra-red

signals from the screen. The headsets also contain three-built in speakers which relay a six-track sound system before, behind and around the listener. The result would appear to be worth it.

IMAX 3D Effect via Polarized Glasses

Each member of the audience must wear "glasses" which channel only the right-eye image to the right eye and the left-eye image to the left eye. The polarized projection system uses a carefully aligned polarised filter in front of each "eye" of the projector (with the two eyes having a different alignment), and have the audience wear polarised glasses, each lens aligned carefully to the respective eye of the projector. This allows excellent alignment and picture steadiness.

Founded in 1967, Imax has consistently delivered the world's premiere cinematic experiences. In 1997, Imax was awarded the sole Oscar® for Scientific and Technical Achievement by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The award recognized Imax's innovation in creating the world's best theatrical projection system as well as Imax's acceptance as part of the entertainment mainstream. As of June 30, 1997, there were more than 150 permanent IMAX theatres in 22 countries, with a backlog of more than 50 theatre systems scheduled to open during the next few years. Imax has forged strategic alliances and relationships with some of the largest corporations in the world, including Sony Corporation, Caesars World (an ITT Corporation subsidiary), Circus Circus Enterprises, Ogden Corporation, Famous Players Inc. (a subsidiary of Viacom Inc.) and Regal Cinemas, Inc. More than 500 million people have seen an IMAX presentation since the medium premiered in 1970. In 1996 alone, more than 60 million people worldwide enjoyed the IMAX experience.

PRESSKIT COLOR SLIDES
(SET OF 8)

1. After a quarrel with her brother Frederick, who threw her nutcracker onto a frozen pond, Clara (Lotte Johnson) reaches out to grab her precious gift. A scene from the film **The IMAX® Nutcracker**, based on the original E.T.A. Hoffmann story.
©MCMXCVII Imax Corporation. All rights reserved. Photo credit: Roberta Parkin.
2. Clara (Lotte Johnson) is captivated by a life-like jester doll in a scene from the upcoming film **The IMAX® Nutcracker**, based on the original E.T.A. Hoffmann classic story.
©MCMXCVII Imax Corporation. All rights reserved. Photo credit: Roberta Parkin.
3. A frightened Clara (Lotte Johnson) clutches the arm of the valiant Nutcracker as one of the villainous mice bears down on them, in a scene from the film **The IMAX® Nutcracker**, based on the original E.T.A. Hoffmann story.
©MCMXCVII Imax Corporation. All rights reserved. Photo credit: Roberta Parkin.
4. The fearless Jack-in-the-box and rapsallion mice eye each other ominously, from a scene in the upcoming film **The IMAX® Nutcracker**, based on E.T.A. Hoffmann's classic story.
©MCMXCVII Imax Corporation. All rights reserved. Photo credit: Roberta Parkin.
5. Clara (Lotte Johnson) gazes in wonder moments after the spell is broken and the Nutcracker Prince (Benjamin Hall) comes to life, in a scene from the film **The IMAX® Nutcracker**, based on the original E.T.A. Hoffmann classic story.
©MCMXCVII Imax Corporation. All rights reserved. Photo credit: Roberta Parkin.
6. Clara (Lotte Johnson) and the Nutcracker Prince (Benjamin Hall) travel by boat to the Palace of Spun Sugar. From the upcoming film **The IMAX® Nutcracker**, based on the original E.T.A. Hoffmann classic story.
©MCMXCVII Imax Corporation. All rights reserved. Photo credit: Roberta Parkin.
7. Sugar Plum (Miriam Margolyes) and the Nutcracker Prince (Benjamin Hall) celebrate the triumphant battle of the Nutcracker's troops over the villainous mice at the Sugar Spun Palace with Clara (Lotte Johnson). From the upcoming film **The IMAX® Nutcracker**, based on the original E.T.A. Hoffmann classic story.
©MCMXCVII Imax Corporation. All rights reserved. Photo credit: Roberta Parkin.
8. With a giant wind blower creating a wintery set, the IMAX® 3D camera crew films on location at Pinewood Studios in London. From a scene from the film **The IMAX® Nutcracker**, based on the original E.T.A. Hoffmann story.
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