

Alternative ‘Nutcrackers’



The confetti-laden Dance of the Snowflakes from Mark Morris' "The Hard Nut." STEPHANIE BERGER

From the classical to the R-rated, you're sure to find a version of Tchaikovsky's beloved ballet that speaks to you.



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When it comes to the holiday season, certain clichés — pardon us, traditions — come to mind: chestnuts roasting on an open fire, visions of sugar plums dancing in one's head and, of course, "The Nutcracker," the Christmas-themed ballet that has captivated children (and adults) for more than a century. But even if classical music and tutus aren't really your thing — or if you've seen the Tchaikovsky ballet a million times — don't write off this holiday classic just yet. Here we round up some of the best, most

unusual and surprising versions, from the classic to the irreverent to the NSFW.

"The Hard Nut"

Mark Morris Dance Group
If "The Nutcracker" were directed by John Waters, it would probably look a lot like this gender-bending, swinging, 1970s romp. With a look based on comic book artist Charles Burns' cartoons, "The Hard Nut" features raucous parties, dancing GI Joes and lots and lots of confetti.
Dec. 12 - 20
Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn
Tickets start at \$25

"Dance the World Nutcracker Festival"

JP Dance Group
This multicultural "Nutcracker" opens in a Harlem brownstone in the height of the roaring '20s, with music from Duke Ellington's jazz arrangement of Tchaikovsky's original score. It then makes its way to the World's Fair, where flapper-girl Clara and her Nutcrack-

er Prince take in performances from a host of New York City's most eclectic dance companies, including Bulgarian folk, Jamaican dancehall and classical Indian.
Dec. 15 - 20
The Secret Theatre, 4402 23rd Street, Long Island City
\$25 general admission, \$20 students/seniors/artists

Keith Michael's "The Nutcracker"

New York Theatre Ballet
An hour-long "Nutcracker"? Sign us up! This kiddie-friendly production adds a cartoonish vibrancy to the traditional ballet, with mice dressed in polka dots, ballerinas dancing with huge chopsticks



Harika Chatlapalli will perform classical Indian dance at "Dance the World Nutcracker Festival." PAVAN CHATLAPALLI

and even an owl that flies above the audience. Adults will dig the sophisticated Art Nouveau set and costumes.

Dec. 11 - 13 New York Theatre Ballet
Florence Gould Hall, 55 East 59th Street
\$34 general admission, \$24 children 12 and under



Keith Michael's "The Nutcracker" has Art Nouveau costumes. JULIETA CERVANTES

"Nutcracker Rouge"

Company XIV
This is not the "Nutcracker" from your childhood. "Nutcracker Rouge" blends classical dance with circus, opera, drag, burlesque and high fashion for the ultimate mashup. Partial nudity, so only 16 and over admitted.
Through Jan. 15
Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane



George Balanchine's production is the standard-bearer. PAUL KOLNIK

Tickets start at \$50

George Balanchine's "The Nutcracker"

New York City Ballet
The *ne plus ultra* of all "Nutcrackers," with an epic on stage snowstorm, hundreds of elaborate costumes (including a mammoth 85-pound Mother Ginger outfit) and that famous Christmas tree that grows from 12 to 40 feet.
Through Jan. 3
David H. Koch Theater, 20 Lincoln



"Nutcracker Rouge" JOSHUA FLANNIGAN