

SAN FRANCISCO BALLET • HELGI TOMASSON'S

NUTCRACKER

SENSORY FRIENDLY
PERFORMANCE

Sunday, December 28, 2025 | 11AM

PRE-PERFORMANCE SOCIAL STORY





I am going to San Francisco Ballet to watch Helgi Tomasson's
Nutcracker!



The *Nutcracker* is a ballet that tells a story. Seeing ballet is like seeing a movie or play, but there is no talking.



Instead of using words, the performers in ballet tell the story through their movement and facial expressions.



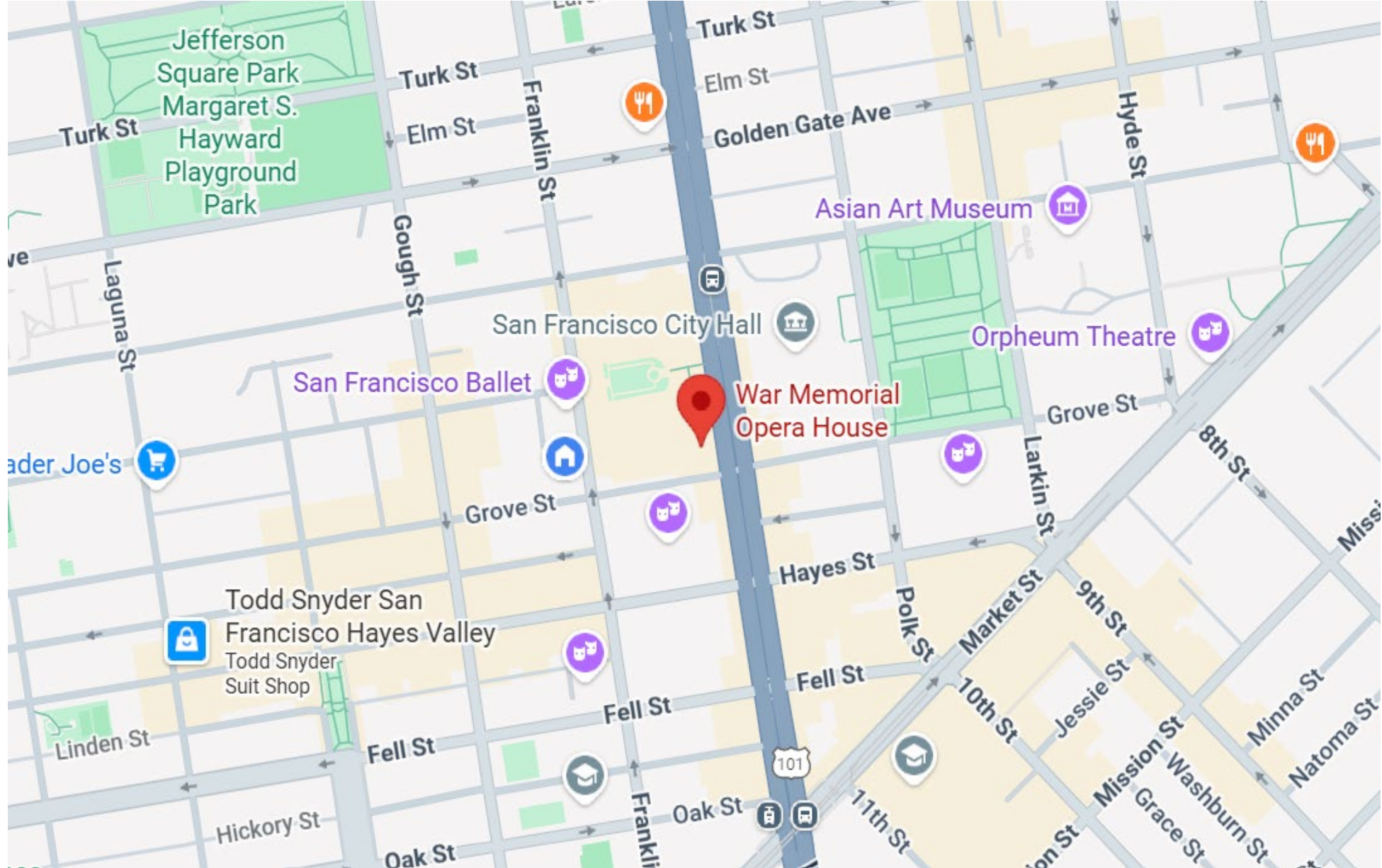
There are also big sets on stage, as well as fancy costumes, and props that help to tell the story.



The performers in a ballet are called dancers.



The San Francisco Ballet *Nutcracker* performance is inside a big building called the War Memorial Opera House.



The War Memorial Opera House building is located at 301 Van Ness Avenue.



I may walk, take a car, or ride public transportation to get to the performance.



I may park my car in a parking garage near the Opera House.
The Performing Arts Garage is located at 360 Grove Street.



When I enter the building, an usher will scan my ticket.

An usher is a friendly helper.



Next, I will walk through a metal detector. If the machine beeps, an usher will help me.



If I need help at any time during the performance, I can always ask an usher.



After I enter the Opera House I will go into the main lobby.

There may be lots of people in the lobby area.



In the lobby I can take a fidget object, visit the tactile touch tables, or try on a tutu.



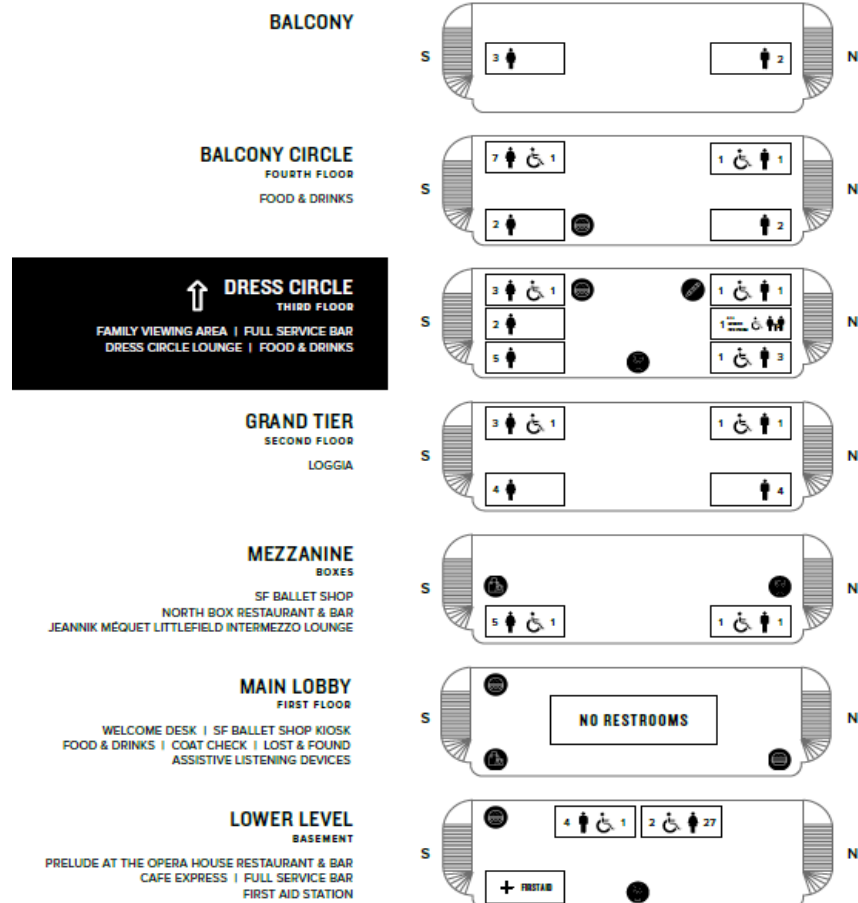
I may see dancers in costumes in the lobby.

I can talk to the dancers and take a picture with them if I like.



I may visit the instrument petting zoo and touch some of the instruments the orchestra plays during the performance.

WELCOME TO THE WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE



The Opera House has 7 levels.

There will be signs to help me figure out which level I am on.



I may take the stairs, elevator, or ramp to get to my seats.



An usher will look at my ticket and show me to my seat in the theater. This is where I will sit to watch *Nutcracker*.



A theater is a big building where a performance happens. The dancers perform on stage, and the audience watches from their seats.



The orchestra plays live music during the ballet performance.
Sometimes the music may be fast, sometimes it may be slow.



If the music is too loud, I can cover my ears or use my headphones.



Before the show starts a host and an ASL interpreter will come on stage to talk about the *Nutcracker*.



When the performance begins, the lights will get a little darker, the orchestra will start to play the music, and people will stop talking.



I will sit quietly in my seat and watch the dancers on stage.

If I need to use my tablet or fidget object, I can.



I will share the space with others sitting around me.

If I like what I see I can clap, vocalize, flap my arms, or dance along.



If I need to take a break during the performance, I can go to the quiet space and come back to my seat whenever I'm ready. There will be a TV in the quiet area so I can still watch the performance.



The *Nutcracker* tells the story of the Stahlbaum family who have a party on Christmas Eve in 1915 San Francisco.



The oldest daughter Clara gets a Nutcracker as a gift from her Uncle Drosselmeyer. After that, lots of magical things start to happen.



Some parts of the *Nutcracker* might be scary. If feel scared I can cover my eyes or take a break in the quiet area.



It's important to remember that the dancers on stage are wearing costumes and acting (another word for pretending).



At the end of Act 1 there will be a big snowstorm on stage.

The snow is not real, but it is very magical.



After Act 1 there will be a break called an intermission.

During intermission I may stay in my seat, go to the bathroom, or have a snack in the lobby.



After intermission I will go back to my seat for Act 2. I will know intermission is over when I hear a bell ring.



When the performance is over the dancers will take a bow.



If I like the show I can stand up, clap my hands, and say “bravo”.

If the clapping noise is too loud, I can cover my ears.



After the performance I will take all my belongings and leave the theater.



If I enjoyed my experience at San Francisco Ballet's *Nutcracker*,
I can come back next year!



QUESTIONS?

Please reach out to SF Ballet's Education Department at education@sfballet.org.

Learn More about San Francisco Ballet at www.sfballet.org

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