



Frequently Asked Questions about the **Sensory-Friendly** Performance of *The Nutcracker*

Q. What is a sensory-friendly performance?

A. A “sensory-friendly” performance is a production that caters to individuals with sensory needs such as people on the autism spectrum, or with anxiety or other cognitive and physical disabilities. The show is modified to allow for more audience movement, staff and actors are trained to accommodate the needs of this population, and it is a judgment-free zone!

Q. When and where is this show taking place?

A. The sensory-friendly performance takes place on **Saturday, December 3 at 2PM in Kendall Theater at The College of New Jersey**. The campus is located at 2000 Pennington Rd. Ewing, NJ 08628. It runs about 105 minutes including a 15-minute intermission.

Q. How can I get tickets?

A. Tickets for the sensory-friendly performance on December 3 can be purchased online at www.roxeyballet.tix.com, in person at the box office or by phone at (609) 397-7616.

Q. Who should attend this performance?

A. The sensory-friendly performance is designed for children and adults with sensory input disorders, autism, or other developmental, cognitive and physical disabilities and their families and caretakers. If an individual has been unable to attend live theater or movies because of their special needs, this is perfect for them. We promise a judgment-free, fun experience for the entire family. Whereas other public performances might frown upon a lot of movement or loud reactions, we will embrace and prepare for it! *All children must be accompanied by an adult. We encourage caretakers and family members of people with special needs to attend.*

Q. Can people without autism or cognitive and physical disabilities attend this performance?

A. This performance is designed for people with sensory-input challenges and their families. Not only will the production be slightly changed to fit their needs, the environment of the audience will also be quite different. The lights in the audience will be raised slightly, allowing for more movement. We expect that many individuals with autism and developmental disabilities will be vocal during the performance! Roxey Ballet patrons without autism or cognitive and physical disabilities may want to attend an alternate performance in order to leave room for this special population and their families to enjoy a comfortable, judgment-free experience.

Q. What changes will you be making to the production on December 3?

A. The beloved plot will not be changing, but some of the technical elements will be softened to accommodate sensitive ears and eyes! Lights in the audience will be up for the entire show to allow safe movement in and out of the theater. Any theatrical haze or strobe lights will be removed. Abrupt and loud sound effects will be lowered significantly and the volume will be set at a comfortable level. House management and production staff will be trained to accommodate the special needs of the population. Unisex restrooms will be available throughout the building. The lobby will be a designated safe area for patrons to relax if they are over-stimulated. We will also allow outside snacks inside the theater to cater to gluten/casein-free diets. Our concessions stand will be stocked with some special snacks too!

Q. My family member/client with autism has difficulty with transitions. How can I prep them for this new experience?

A. Roxey Ballet provides a plot synopsis of *The Nutcracker* and a social story to help prepare first-timers. We encourage families and caretakers to read these to prepare for the whole experience, from beginning to end. Also, we have a "Meet Your Seat" session at 1PM on December 3, an hour before the performance begins. Patrons and their families can come early to see where they will be sitting, get a preview of the set, and meet our friendly staff.

Q. Can I bring edibles, fidget toys, headphones or other items that help my child/family member stay calm?

A. Of course! We encourage you to bring any items that might make the experience more comfortable and enjoyable.

Q. My family member/client is in a wheelchair. Can you accommodate us?

A. Yes, Kendall Hall is equipped with access ramps and wheelchair accessible seating. Please inform the box office of any mobility issues when purchasing tickets.

Q. Are service animals allowed in the theater?

A. Yes, Roxey Ballet and Kendall Hall always allow service animals to accompany patrons.

Q. My family member/client is deaf or hard-of-hearing. Will there be ASL interpreters at this performance?

A. No. Roxey Ballet will not have an ASL interpreter at the performance, but will have assistive listening devices for any patrons with hearing needs.

Q. If my family member/client is not able to sit through the entire show, will we be able to leave the theater? If they decide to, will we be able to return to our seat?

A. Yes, ushers and staff will be helping any theatergoer to the lobby area. If the patron decides they cannot remain for the whole the show, they can absolutely leave the theater early. If they simply need a break, our lobbies will be available. Whenever possible, house management will guide patrons back to their original seats. If not, they can be reseated in the back of the theater.

Q. Does Roxey Ballet have any other programs for children or adults with special needs?

A. Yes! Roxey Ballet has an inclusive dance education program called Bodies and Wheels in Motion for children with autism spectrum disorders and other physical and cognitive disabilities. Roxey Ballet uses dance as a means to build confidence, establish tools for communication, and make friends. You can find out more online at <http://www.roxeyballet.org/#!wheels-and-bodies-in-motion/c8o5>.

Q. Who can I contact about the sensory-friendly performance?

A. Feel free to contact Hailey Glover, Director of Education and Outreach, with questions! Call (609) 397-7616 or email her at outreach@roxeyballet.org.

