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Troupes plan for holiday shows

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Christmas in July? Well, to a degree.

Cold weather may only be a dream at this particular blast-furnace moment, but the Atlanta Ballet and Georgia Ballet have been busily planning their December productions of "The Nutcracker." Although it may seem early for pondering fairies, princes and dancing snowflakes, both companies will be celebrating 50th anniversaries of performing the holiday classic.

The Atlanta Ballet, whose 2009-2010 season marks its 80th year, will present 19 performances of "Nutcracker" at the Fox Theatre, Dec. 11-27. The company began dancing George Balanchine's version in 1959 and switched to artistic director John McFall's interpretation, set in a Russian wonderland and featuring 150 lavish 19th-century-style costumes, in 1995.

Like last season, the Atlanta Ballet Orchestra will perform Tchaikovsky's score on the opening weekend only, Dec. 11-13, with remaining performances danced to a recording. Tickets go on sale Aug. 10 (404-892-3303, [www.atlantaballet.com](#)).

As it has for 49 years, the Georgia Ballet will perform the adaptation of "Nutcracker" by its late founder, Iris Hensley, featuring dancing snowflakes, giant toy soldiers and an ever-growing Christmas tree. The performances will be Dec. 4-6 at Cobb Civic Center. Tickets will be available starting Aug. 17 (770-528-0881, [www.georgiaballet.org](#)).

The full lineup of the Atlanta Ballet's 80th anniversary season, its 15th under McFall: "Mozart's Magic Flute" (premiere of an update by choreographer Mark Godden), Oct. 15-24; "Pinocchio," Oct. 24-25; "Nutcracker," Dec. 11-27; "Cinderella," Feb. 4-14; "Vivaldi's Four Seasons" (James Kudelka's interpretation performed outside Canada for the first time), March 25-28; and "Sheer Exhilaration" (mixed repertoire showcasing new choreographers), May 6-9. All except "Nutcracker" are at Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre.

The Georgia Ballet's season includes "A Sleepy Hollow Story," "Paquita" and a new work choreographed by Janusz Mazon on Oct. 24-25 at the Cobb Civic Center, and original works in a program titled "Spectrum" in February.

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