



“Casse Noisette” presents an original concept and scintillating performances ... Led by a mesmerizing performance by Jason Guy as both Joe and Tchaikovsky, the five talented cast members play roles in both the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. Jennifer Anderson’s costumes: beautiful, functional, and fittingly representative of each time period, make it easy to distinguish each character ... Keeping these two men separate is hard enough when Guy moves from one role to the other in successive scenes, but it must be doubly difficult to portray each of them when the time periods occur nearly simultaneously. This pas de deux with one performer is miraculous. Nancy O. Graham offers a wonderfully comic portrayal of Antonietta Dell’Era, a principal dancer with the Imperial Ballet. We next see her as a fellow teacher in Joe’s school, cautiously trying to break through the wall Joe has built between himself and the world, resulting in a heartbreaking confrontation. Jason Kellerman plays both Tchaikovsky’s brother Modeste, who manages and protects the composer, and a physical education teacher, distinguishing himself in each role (not to mention a comic turn as the consort of the Sugar Plum Fairy and Modeste’s impressive sleight-of-hand maneuvers). Serena Vesper is both Tchaikovsky’s sad and sickly sister Sasha who can hardly move as the result of a terrible accident, and the agile and graceful Fairy, a gorgeously-costumed ballerina. Finally, Bradley Levine plays Blaine, the male prostitute picked up first on the phone and then in person by Joe, and Tchaikovsky’s upper-class nephew Bob. By means of costumes, diction and demeanor, Levine enables us to easily identify each character ... Bravo to Sowle for choreographing the changes between time periods and scenes so efficiently that there is never a delay, despite characters entering and exiting from between the curtains and the wings, and large set pieces moving backstage while scenes take place in front of the curtain! The director finds both the humor and the pathos in this play, often changing on a dime.

-- Barbara Waldinger, *Berkshire On Stage*