Nutcracker a ‘family affair’

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APTONS — The International Academy of Dance and the Santa Cruz Dance Guild will present “Nutcracker: Experience the Magic” today and Sunday at the Cabrillo College Crocker Theater.

The annual ballet has grown every year since its beginning about five years ago, said Shannon Cullem-Chipman, who is co-directing the show with Vicki Bergland, adding new scenes, effects, costumes and more.

More than 100 people make up the cast, some as young as 4 years old. Many have been involved with the production and know how much of a commitment it is, Cullem-Chipman said, adding that planning for the next year’s show “starts pretty much right after the last one ended.”

“If they’ve been in it before, they know the commitment,” she said. “They audition and they’re excited. It keeps them motivated and working hard and striving for that next level of achievement in the Nutcracker.”

This year will feature Principal Dancers Alison Roper (honored by Dance Magazine as one of “25 to watch”) and Brett Bauer from Oregon Ballet Theater, performing the roles of Sugar Plum and Cavalier.

This production of the Nutcracker is described as a “family affair,” where generations of dancers perform alongside one another, with parents dancing with their children.

“Nutcracker: Experience the Magic” runs today and Sunday at 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. at the Cabrillo College Crocker Theater, 6500 Soquel Drive in Aptos. For tickets and information, visit nutcrackeressantacruz.com/index.html.

Alison Roper and Brett Bauer will perform as Sugar Plum and Cavalier in “Nutcracker: Experience the Magic.”