

Odyssey Dance Theatre is very sorry for the reaction to their appearance on the KSL TV morning show Wednesday morning. We were there to promote the amazing event that took place at the City Creek Center where we had the opportunity to share some highlights from our ReduxNut-Cracker. There are two issues at play here and I will address both.

First - The Tease - we were there to perform our version of the Chinese Dance that we have been performing for several years and have done numerous times on TV with no problems or negative reaction. The hosts usually like to do a "tease" of several seconds to highlight what is coming up and we were gathered there at the City Creek Center to do that. As is typical with live TV segments, we were given a 5 second warning of the tease which typically we do with dancers gathered around the host in a pose. Just before we went on the air the host said - let's just walk towards the camera. The dancers responded in character and started following the host - the host then cleared the camera shot leaving the dancers alone and exposed. They were not intentionally mocking the Asian culture - but somewhat caught off guard and left exposed in an improvisational moment. What appeared on the screen can certainly be thought of as inappropriate - but there was no malice or racial overtone intended. We apologize for that. The suggestion that this moment constitutes racism as its worst - is an unfair and undeserved accusation - and certainly doesn't reflect the overall tone of our Chinese dance that we performed afterwards.

Second - The Chinese Dance itself - The Nutcracker has been performed since 1892 - and the variation segments of the ballet are intended to be celebrations and introductions to various amazing cultures from around the world - The Spanish, Arabian, Chinese and Russians dances are iconic. In our version we chose to represent the Asian culture as strong women who have martial arts abilities with a hip hop flair. NO ONE is making fun of Chinese in this dance! We are celebrating those things from the Asian culture that have been a part of their legacy for millennia.

The calls for taking the Chinese Dance out of the Nutcracker strikes at the very heart of the inclusive intent of the entire piece. If we remove the Chinese Dance - then we must also remove the Russian - the Arabian - the Spanish also - and then there is no longer a Nutcracker. To remove the Chinese Dance is to eliminate a huge and deserving culture from this production. We see our version in its full context as uplifting, empowering and clever. Certainly NOT the racist and bigoted piece it has been characterized as.

We are sorry that there were those that were offended - it certainly was not our intent. We hope that audiences will come to see the entire production and judge for themselves.

Derryl Yeager  
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