

"Peachtree Creek: A Natural and Unnatural History"

same family coping with love and loss against the backdrop of changing times. *Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta's Morris and Rae Frank Theatre*, 5342 Tilly Mill Road, Dunwoody, 770-395-2533 or visit [atlantajcc.org](http://atlantajcc.org).

**MJ: THE MODERN JOB** (Nov. 14) Written and directed by Dr. Anne Winbush Watts, associate vice president for academic affairs at Morehouse College, this play interweaves dialogue with music and dance in a context of humor and tragedy. Set in present-day Atlanta, the play addresses the age-old question: "Why do good people suffer?" The answer is found in the comforting scripture, "There is hope for a tree that has been cut down." (Job 14:7) *Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel*, 830 Westview Drive; for more information, call 404-681-2800, ext. 3512.

**HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS** (Nov. 19–Dec. 19) This original musical celebrates the joyous traditions of the holidays. Friends and family gather to recall holiday memories through story and song. *North DeKalb Cultural Center*, 5339 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Dunwoody, 770-396-1727.

**PEACHTREE BATTLE** (Through Nov. 21) With over three years of sold out performances, this is the longest-running show in Atlanta theater history. The over-the-top comedy tells the story of an uppity Buckhead family wedding turned upside down when one of its own marries a Hooters girl—and that's not the only surprise! *Ansley Park Playhouse*, 1545 Peachtree St., 404-875-1193 or visit [ansleyparkplayhouse.com](http://ansleyparkplayhouse.com).

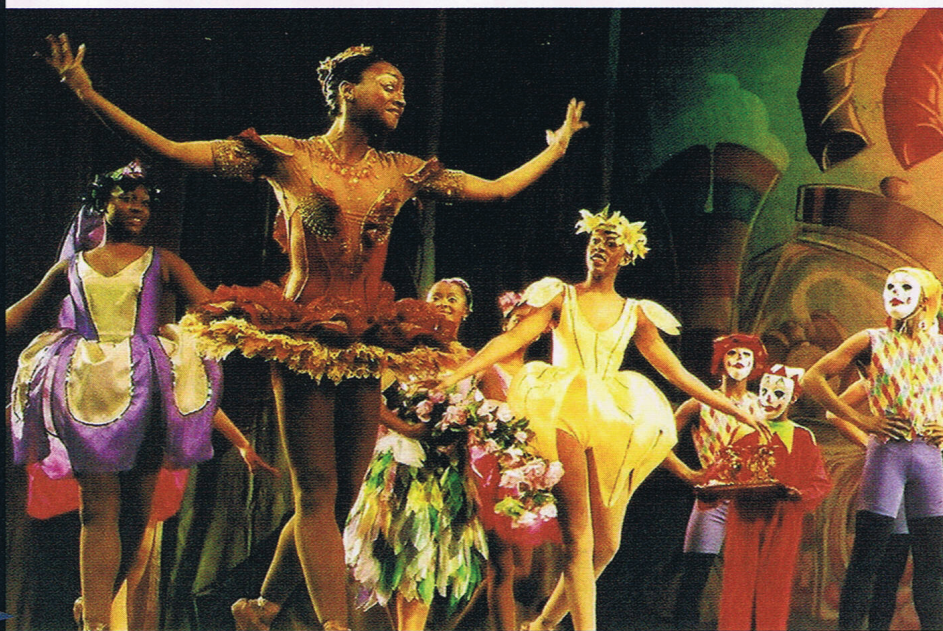
**THE FOURTH WALL** (Through Nov. 21) When close friends and family do something wildly different than they've been known to do, the people around them tend to freak out a little, which is exactly what happens in this comedy. Peggy rearranges her living room furniture in an unorthodox way and her husband wants to know what's going on. *Alliance Theatre*, 1280 Peachtree St., 404-733-5000 or visit [alliancetheatre.com](http://alliancetheatre.com).

## AROUND TOWN

### A CLOSER LOOK

## THE URBAN NUTCRACKER

**W**HEN THE BALLETHNIC DANCE COMPANY DEBUTED THE *Urban Nutcracker* in 1991, it was touted as a "holiday tradition in the making." Within a mere five years, Ballethnic dropped the slogan because, thankfully, its wish had come true. This year's installment of the Atlanta production promises to pack the same punch as previous years, but attendees can expect a fresh crop of dancers (including new leads), new costumes and a spruced-up set. *Urban Nutcracker* puts an imaginative ethnic twist on the Tchaikovsky ballet classic. In this rendition, however, instead of heading to the Land of Sweets, heroine Sarah (aka Clara) heads to Atlanta's Sweet Auburn Avenue in the 1940s, where she teams up with Brown Sugar (the Sugar Plum Fairy) and Chocolatier (aka Cavalier). The Reggae Rag Dolls and the Coca-Cola Pas de Six (a dancing six-pack of arguably Atlanta's favorite beverage) also add local flavor. The show features more than 80 professional and amateur dancers, including 60 local children. Despite obvious digressions from the original, Ballethnic co-founders and co-artistic directors Nena Gilreath and Waverly Lucas II, both former Atlanta Ballet and Dance Theatre of Harlem dancers, insist that their adaptation embraces the heart of the holiday classic. "It's about a little girl who dreams of faraway places and her dreams come true," says Gilreath. It seems fitting that Gilreath and Lucas would successfully pull off a production about fulfilled dreams for some 13 years, considering the fact that the Ballethnic Dance Company has fostered and fulfilled the dancing dreams of many local talents, including D.M. Therrell High School graduate Willie Anderson, now of the San Jose Dance Company in California, and North Atlanta High School graduate Royce K. Zackery, now performing with the Pascal Rioult Dance Theatre in New York City. Along with providing an opportunity for family and friends to come together to enjoy a unique holiday show, Lucas and Gilreath say the production also aims to shatter the stereotypical image of dancers. "We're a multicultural dance company," says Lucas. "We want to show everyone that great ballet dancers come in all shades." *The Urban Nutcracker* runs Nov. 18–21. *Ferst Center for the Arts at Georgia Tech*, 349 Ferst Drive. For more information, call 404-762-1416 or visit [ballethnic.org](http://ballethnic.org). —CHANDRA R. THOMAS



BALLETHNIC DANCE CO.