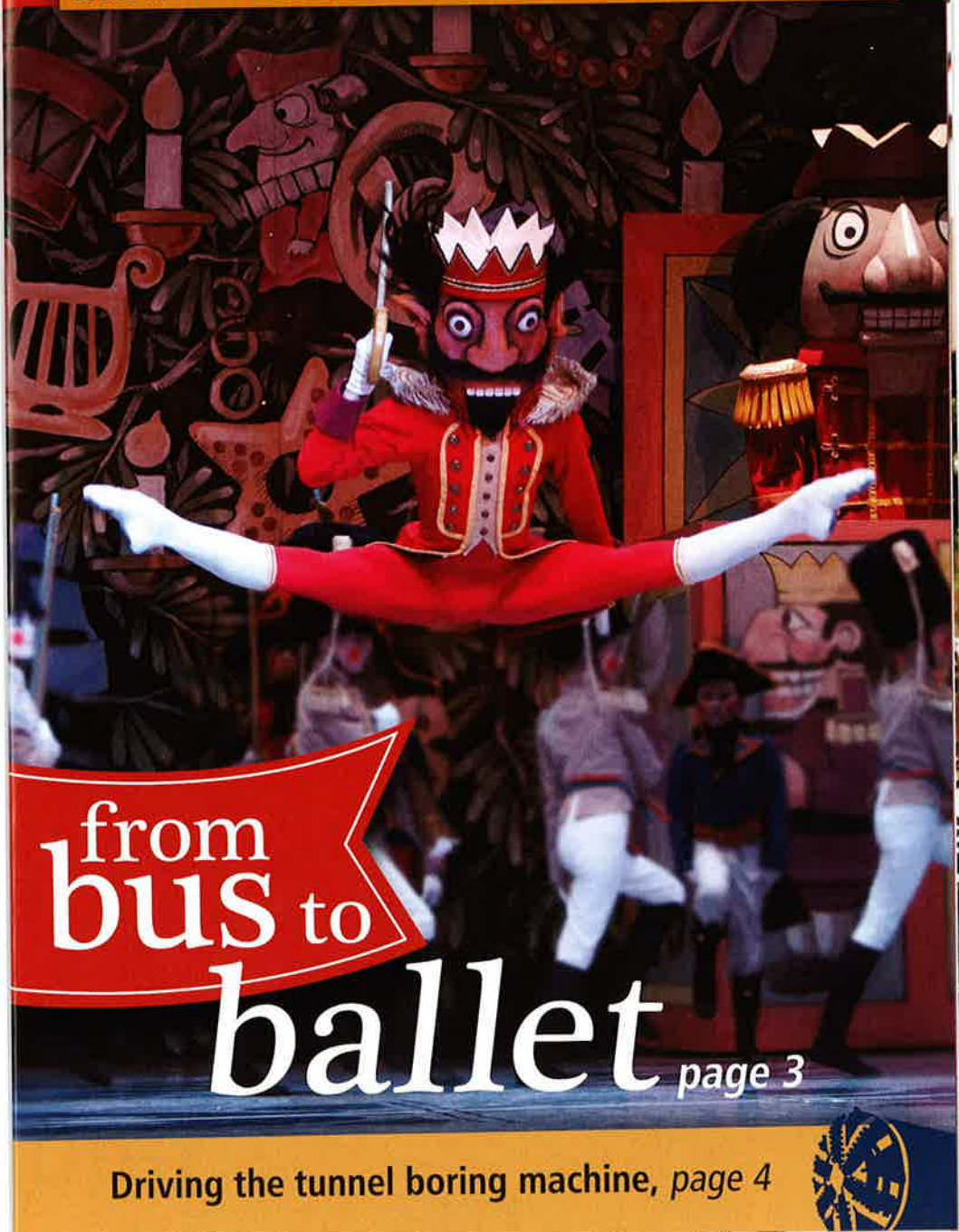


RIDE

 **SOUNDTRANSIT**
RIDE THE WAVE

SOUND TRANSIT NEWS FOR SOUND TRANSIT RIDERS

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from bus to ballet

A

bus can take you nearly anywhere. And when you're on a bus, you never know who's in the next seat.

For Andrew Bartee, the journey began as a middle school student in Everett. Today he's dancing as The Nutcracker in the Pacific Northwest Ballet's beloved production of the same name. An ST Express bus – route 510 from Everett to Seattle – is the vehicle that helped him on the road to success.

A part-time student at PNB's ballet school since age 12, Andrew's class schedule in downtown Seattle became more intense as his skills and performance improved. By age 14, with six or seven classes each week, his mother could no longer chauffeur him and still keep up with three younger sons at home. That's when he joined the Route 510 bus brigade. When the school day ended at North Middle School, he boarded the bus at Everett Station, about a mile away.

"At first I was scared. I had only ridden the school bus before," Andrew says. "But once I got comfortable with it, I loved it."

His early routine included sitting near the driver in case he had questions. He used the commute time to finish homework so that once he arrived at ballet class, his entire focus was on dance. As a regular 510 rider, he made a few commuter friends, including a young woman close to his age who worked downtown and a few others on staff at PNB.

Andrew joined the professional ballet company as an apprentice in 2008 and was promoted to corps de ballet in 2009. In this year's production of the Stowell/Sendak Nutcracker, he dances the physically demanding scene where The Nutcracker duels the King of Mice.

Today he walks to work from his nearby Seattle apartment. The bus is still his wheels, though, for going out with friends in the city, or jumping back on the 510 to visit family back home in Everett.

On the cover: Andrew Bartee performs as the Nutcracker in the fight scene from Pacific Northwest Ballet's Stowell/Sendak Nutcracker, running through Dec. 27 in Seattle. Find tickets at www.pnb.org and your best transit match to get there at www.soundtransit.org. Photo © Angela Sterling

“I encourage people to ride the bus all the time. It's a lot easier than you think.”

