

## A beautiful Sleeping Princess

Watching a ballet - be it a contemporary or a classical ballet - is not something that appeals to all individuals. The thought of following a story line expressed only through the medium of dance, especially when it is restricted to a set of traditional movements, has about the same appeal as watching a foreign language film without subtitles. And yet...if you man up (or woman up) and go out there and watch a ballet, you find an amazing thing. The music, with no words, with no lyrics coupled with the dancing...stirs up this melting pot of emotion in you. Quickly you discover yourself laughing, crying, in pain, in joy, all on some invisible cue.

 By Riccardo Spagni 20 Jan 2010



The Sleeping Princess was the first Cape Town City Ballet production I had the pleasure of seeing, having only moved down to Cape Town two years ago. The story is not too different to the traditional Sleeping Beauty tale we know and love, and since the classic Disney film adapted the ballet score for their musical numbers there is at least some prior familiarity with the music. As with any ballet, it is critical that you familiarise yourself with the story beforehand. For parents who are taking young children, and I cannot emphasise this strongly enough, you must educate your children with regards to the story, the characters, and appropriate behaviour during a performance. If you suspect they will be unable to sit in silence and enjoy the ballet, please do not take them with and ruin it for those around you. Ballet is a highly visceral experience and a parent constantly explaining the progressing storyline to a 5- year-old seated diagonally behind you detracts from that. But I digress!

Ballet in South Africa does not have the massive-budget treatment that ballets overseas may have, and this is reflected by the lack of a live orchestra. Still, the pre-recorded music was of a high enough quality and played on large enough equipment to create something of an orchestra feel. What money was saved by not having a live orchestra was most definitely, definitely spent on the costumes. They were lavish and eye-catching, to the point where my partner for the evening insisted that I find out for her where she can get a pair of boots the duchesses wore!

Performances were fantastic all around, and you can see that these are accomplished dancers. I particularly enjoyed the haughty, evil, looking Carabosse, danced by ( Robin van Wyk). Princess Aurora (Megan Swar) and Prince Florimund (Xola Putye) had powerful, hauntingly good performances. However, my favourite scene by far was the hunting party scene. Gallifron (Warren May) pulled off a fantastic game of blind man's bluff, and I had the pleasure of finally seeing my dear friend, Jane Fidler, dance as a duchess on her off night. Also enjoyable is the final act where playful dances from traditional fairy tale characters could be seen.

Most unfortunately, I caught this ballet right at the end of its run, so alas, dear readers, you cannot go and see it any more. But keep a close eye on Cape Town City Ballet's website ([www.capetowncityballet.org.za](http://www.capetowncityballet.org.za)) and be sure to catch their next production, The Firebird and Les Sylphides at the Maynardville Open-Air Theatre. Taking place every Sunday from 24 January till 21 February 2010 at 20h15. Ticket prices range from R90 -R100.

## ABOUT RICCARDO SPAGNI

After serving his time in Namibia, Riccardo got bored of Johannesburg and moved to Cape Town to become one with the mountain. He spends his days trawling biscuit factories hoping to discover the Next Big Cookie Flavour and writing reviews for the BizLounge that he traditionally delivers four or five days after deadline. View my profile and articles...

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