

Cape Town City Ballet's *Sleeping Beauty* opens to rapturous applause



By [Debbie Hathway](#)

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Cape Town City Ballet's (CTCB) much-anticipated production of *Sleeping Beauty* opened to a full house at the Artscape Opera House in Cape Town at the weekend. The first full-length classical ballet to be presented under new CEO Debbie Turner, dance fans were eager to see the result of months of hard work behind the scenes by company and cast alike and, for select performances, to see international guest stars in the lead roles.



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Ticket sales at the time of writing bode well for a successful season at the box office, despite price increases that are a necessary evil to cover costs for a production of this scale.

Rapturous applause

Washington Ballet's Andile Ndlovu and English National Ballet's Precious Adams danced the roles of Prince Florimund and Princess Aurora on the opening weekend to rapturous applause from a clearly adoring public. Ndlovu is South African and returns to this country from time to time to guest for various occasions.

He was recently nominated for a Benois de la Danse Award in the category of Best Male Dancer, alongside the winner Vadim Muntagirov, a principal at The Royal Ballet.



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(Muntagirov will also be performing in this season of *Sleeping Beauty* opposite Tatiana Melnik from Hungarian State Opera.)

Adams was a double prize winner at the 2014 Prix de Lausanne and was awarded the Emerging Artist Award at the UK Critics' Circle National Dance Awards 2018.

This was Adams' first lead role in a full-length classical ballet and *Sleeping Beauty* is considered one of the most difficult. The role of Aurora demands both stamina and strength, particularly in the Rose Adage where she is required to balance on one leg, while she takes each suitor's hand one by one. On opening night these suitors were Ivan Boonzaaier, Conrad Nusser, Craig Pedro and Xola Putye.

Watching Putye's moment with Adams, I was reminded of how highly he was praised for his partnering skills by former CTCB principal Megan Swart. Adams' lyrical expression, beautiful arms, soft upper body positions and ability to engage with the cast as though whatever she was doing required little effort at all was an absolute pleasure to watch.



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Ndlovu is no stranger to the spotlight and delivered a strong performance. Both Ndlovu and Adams are natural performers, emphasis on the word 'natural', with ready smiles that light up the stage. This is all I ever want to see from a dance company – natural, relaxed and confident in the knowledge that they have the technique. All they have to do is let go and dance!

Well worth a visit

Beyond technique, professional dancers in key roles must have acting ability to draw audiences in and make their performances memorable. What a joy it was to see Eduard Greyling's commanding presence on stage as King Florestan – I couldn't take my eyes off him when he was in action – and Johnny Bovang excelled as Catalabutte, Master-of-Ceremonies. Even Boonzaaier as Prince Florimund's tutor in Act 2 (The Hunting Party) had the opportunity to demonstrate his comedic flair.

Olivia Parfitt as Carabosse, The Wicked Fairy, was arguably the scene-stealer every time she set foot on stage. Petite Chante Daniels also stood out as the Fairy of the Songbird, but even more so as Princess Florine in her pas de deux with the Bluebird (Stephen Underwood) in Act 3. The audience also loved Jordan Roelfze as Puss in Boots and Meghan Henegan as The White Cat, a role that she's practically made her own, as well as the short-and-sweet appearance by Caitlin Smith as Red Riding Hood and Xola Putye as The Wolf.



© Pat Bromilow-Downing

Did anybody else notice the rose theme in the programme and the presentation bouquets?

Turner is renowned for attention to detail and this production was no exception. I haven't attended a full-length classical ballet performance for a while but after seeing Cape Town City Ballet's *Sleeping Beauty*, I could easily be persuaded to do it again.

Classical ballet accompanied by a live orchestra is an occasion never to be missed. Under the baton of Brandon Phillips, the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra delivered on every level.

With lighting by Wilhelm Disbergen to offset Peter Cazalet's magnificent sets and costumes, the experience and insights on the ballet provided through its staging by the inimitable Denise Schultz Godfrey and a company that is clearly on an upward trajectory, *Sleeping Beauty* is well worth a visit to this very beautiful theatre.



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Sleeping Beauty is on at the Artscape Opera House until 31 August. Tickets cost from R180 to R695 with concessions for pensioners, scholars and block bookings of 10 or more.

The Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra will play for performances on Saturday 17, Friday 23, Saturday 24 and Wednesday 28 August at 7.30pm as well as the 3pm matinee on Saturday 31 August.

Bookings can be made at Computicket on [0861 915 8000](tel:08619158000), online at www.computicket.com or at any Shoprite Checkers outlet.

ABOUT DEBBIE HATHWAY

Debbie Hathway is an award-winning writer, with a special interest in luxury lifestyle (watches, jewellery, travel, property investment) and the arts.

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