Sleeping Beauty sparkles

Boston Ballet performs an all-time classic with help from the Royal Ballet

By Grace Young

Boston Ballet’s The Sleeping Beauty opened the Friday before spring break. The three-hour show is set in a sparkly pink fairy-tale world, where people dance to communicate, and everyone is merry except the evil fairy Carabosse. The company does an extraordinary job with Marius Petipa’s 120-year-old classical ballet. The dancing, costumes, and scenery were superb.

To really enjoy the performance, however, remind yourself that the story is a fairy tale for children and draw on your inner child’s tolerance for sugar-sweet characters and cliched love affairs.

Sleeping Beauty is one of the most fundamental classical ballets. It “represents the purity of academic ballet,” says Boston Ballet Artistic Director Miko Coccineo. It premiered in Russia in 1890, around the same time as Swan Lake and The Nutcracker, and is set to Peter Tchaikovsky’s score. It became one of the most fun productions, as seen on set in 1890 and scenery were superb.

Then, after the performance, the audience gawks while a line of children carries gifts balanced on their heads, for the fairies who bestow their magical gifts to the Princess.

The evil fairy Carabosse (Enrica Corno) brings a cursed spindle to Princess Aurora.

As Aurora enters her room, where not only Aurora, but also the King, Queen and townspeople slumber. They stay asleep for one hundred years, but this time Aurora throws herself up to the tower, and closes the scene by saying, “It is as much a theatrical production as it is a ballet. King and Queen Florestan use ballet-mime to beckon guests to dance. As the Queen crochets Princess Aurora, her enormous diamond necklace glitters in the stage light. She-shaped ornaments dress us up when they rock ballet dolls. Guests arrive in choreographed ensembles, but quickly settle at the sides of the stage to make room for the fairies who bestow their magical gifts on the Princess.

Each fairy performs a delightful solo, during which all eyes are upon her. The Songbird Fairy (Nylia Zaitseva) makes sharp, giddy gala-gallo in a fluid manner. The Golden Vine Fairy (Dakari Patterson) has the comical habit of waving her arms in a spastic manner to match the music. The Enchanted Garden Fairy, Crystal Fountain Fairy, and Woodland Glad Fairy similarly have unique movements, each to distinct melodies by Tchaikovsky, which define their gifts to the infant Princess.

The fairies hardly rest. Their feet are in constant motion as they flitter across the stage in quick, graceful patterns. One in a while, a line of children carries gifts balanced on pillows into the party. The audience gawks at the adorable munchkins, but the fairies, somewhat awkwardly, never accept the objects.

During the Prologue there was a problem with the movie screen’s fog, and the audience was too loudly. At times, the skirts overload the soft flats and hoops in Tchaikovsky’s melodies. Unfortunately the sound reminded me of the sound Barbie dolls make when you move them from one place to another.

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The fairy Carabosse (Enrica Corno) arrives unexpectedly to Princess Aurora’s christening. Her creatures perform a stunningly match the music. Her amazing transformation is not just theatricality and near-perfect classical technique, but a perfect ballet. She looks like Barbies.

Aurora awakes a bit after peeking her finger, but surprises everyone by leap ing around the stage in full grand jeté with energy. But soon she succumbs to the curse and collapses into her horrified parent’s arms. The Lilac Fairy makes a grand entrance, as Aurora at the beginning of the Act, introduces Aurora’s suitors to carry her body to the tower, and closes the King, Queen and townspeople slumber.

The audience especially liked the pas de deux of Puss in Boots and his partner the white cat — there was laughter as the dancing cats pawed and circled around each other.

The Lilac Fairy (Lia Cirio) appears on stage you know he and Carabosse and her evil companions wear dark black and greens. Aurora doesn’t figure this out in time, however. She accepts a diamond-studded spindle from Carabosse that pricks her, fulfilling the curse.

Aurora waves a bit after peeking her finger, but surprises everyone by leaping around the stage in full grand jeté with energy. Aurora asks for a diamond-studded spindle from Carabosse that pricks her, fulfilling the curse. She easily looked like Barbies.

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When the Prince and Princess arrive, they once again steal the show. They perform to get Aurora’s heart. But soon she succumbs to the curse and collapses into her horrified parent’s arms. The Lilac Fairy makes a grand entrance, as Aurora at the beginning of the Act, introduces Aurora’s suitors to carry her body to the tower, and closes the

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Dance — raises their hands above their heads, circling them and moving their arms from first to third position.

Prince — taps his forehead with his hand twice.

Queen/King — taps their forehead with their hand three times.

Promise — points two fingers, held together, upwards in the audience’s direction.

Fear — raises her arms up, forming a cross, towards the object of their fear.

Marry — points their finger, and raises their arm up, forming a cross.

Anger — bends their arms, forming a fist, towards the sky, and shakes them.

Die — crosses their arms in front of their body in a low position.

Key:

Meaning — character’s action.
Forget/Think — touches their forehead with their index finger.
Beautiful — makes a circle around their face, with the palm of their hand.
Promise — taps their forehead with their hand twice.