

BOSTON BALLET

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BOSTON BALLET PRESENTS MARIUS PETIPA'S *THE SLEEPING BEAUTY*

AUDIENCES WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH ACCLAIMED CLASSIC THIS SPRING

March 28, 2017 (BOSTON, MA) — Boston Ballet presents the coming-of-age fairytale *The Sleeping Beauty* by Marius Petipa with additional choreography by Sir Frederick Ashton. Hailed as one of the Company's trademark works, this quintessential production features soaring music by Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky and sumptuous sets and costumes by Emmy Award-winning designer David Walker. *The Sleeping Beauty* runs April 28–May 27 at the Boston Opera House.

"This is my favorite production of *The Sleeping Beauty*, and I am excited to share it with Boston audiences again. It is a fantastic introduction for the first-time ballet goer, as well as a true pleasure for connoisseurs," said Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen. "*The Sleeping Beauty* is ingrained in ballet history, and I am proud that Boston Ballet continues this legacy. The tradition, emotion, and atmosphere created by the superb dancing, costumes, and sets have made audiences fall in love with it again and again."

This spring, Company dancers will be tasked with adding their fresh take on *The Sleeping Beauty*'s many iconic and technically challenging roles, including Carabosse, Aurora, Lilac Fairy, Bluebird, and Princess Florine, among others. Erica Cornejo, a principal dancer with Boston Ballet since 2006, will reprise her role as Carabosse this spring, marking her final performances with the Company. Ballet Master and former Principal Dancer Larissa Ponomarenko performed Aurora in Boston Ballet's previous performances of *The Sleeping Beauty* and has been coaching Company dancers in this role and others.

The Sleeping Beauty begins with the christening of Princess Aurora. All the fairies are invited to bestow gifts on the young princess, except for the Fairy Carabosse. She is outraged and gives a spindle to Aurora, announcing that one day the princess will prick her finger on it and die. The Lilac Fairy has yet to present her gift, so she undermines Carabosse's curse by promising that Aurora will not die, but shall instead fall into a deep sleep for 100 years until awakened by a prince's kiss. As predicted, Aurora pricks her finger on a spindle on her 16th birthday, but the Lilac Fairy intervenes and puts Aurora and her kingdom under a sleeping spell. A century later, Prince Desiré is hunting in the forest and encounters the Lilac Fairy who leads him to Aurora. He kisses her and breaks the spell. The ballet concludes with a grand wedding celebration attended by numerous fairytale characters.

The Sleeping Beauty has a rich history in ballet. A collaboration between Petipa and Tchaikovsky, *The Sleeping Beauty* premiered January 15, 1890 at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia. It was Nicolai Sergeyev, a former *regisseur* of the Mariinsky and assistant to Petipa, who brought *The Sleeping Beauty* to the West. Sergeyev left Russia in 1918 after the October Revolution, and took with him notebooks containing choreographic notations for about two dozen ballets. He staged Petipa's production of *The Sleeping Beauty* for the first time in 1921 for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, and again mounted the ballet in 1939 for Ninette de Valois and the Vic-Wells Ballet, which would ultimately become The Royal Ballet.

After World War II, *The Sleeping Beauty* reopened the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden on February 20, 1946. De Valois oversaw the production, which included her choreography and that of Sir Frederick Ashton. In 1977, de Valois revived *The Sleeping Beauty*, commissioning David Walker to design new sets and costumes, which Boston Ballet purchased in 1992. This version premiered at Boston Ballet in 2005, and was subsequently performed in 2009 and 2013.

Marius Petipa (1818–1910), considered the “father of classical ballet,” danced and choreographed for the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia for nearly 60 years. He choreographed and re-staged numerous classical ballets that remain a staple in the repertoire of every major ballet company in the world, including *The Nutcracker*, *Giselle*, *Le Corsaire*, *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Don Quixote*, *La Bayadère*, *Raymonda*, and *Coppélia*, among others. Petipa's ballets utilized the corps de ballet, which had previously only been used as an ornamental frame for solos. He also restructured the classical pas de deux into three sections: the adagio, the male and female solo variations, and the coda; some of his finest pas de deux are on display in *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Ninette de Valois (1898–2001) founded Vic-Wells Ballet in 1931, which later became The Royal Ballet. She served as director until 1963 and director of The Royal Ballet School until 1970. De Valois hired **Sir Frederick Ashton** (1904–1988) as resident choreographer in 1938; he succeeded de Valois as director in 1963 and retired in 1970. Ashton trained with Léonide Massine and Marie Rambert and made his choreographic debut in 1926 with *A Tragedy of Fashion* for Rambert Ballet. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential dance figures of the 20th century and his choreography developed a signature English style characterized by lyrical dancing, *épaulement* (carriage of the head and shoulders), and nimble footwork.

All performances of *The Sleeping Beauty* take place at the Boston Opera House (539 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111):

Friday, April 28 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, April 29 at 1 pm
Saturday, April 29 at 7:30 pm
Sunday, April 30 at 1 pm
Thursday, May 4 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, May 6 at 1 pm
Sunday, May 7 at 1 pm*

Friday, May 12 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, May 13 at 1 pm
Friday, May 19 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, May 20 at 1 pm
Saturday, May 20 at 7:30 pm
Thursday, May 25 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, May 27 at 7:30 pm

*Post-show talk with Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and artists

Tickets start at \$35. For more information, visit bostonballet.org or call 617.695.6955.

The Sleeping Beauty is approximately 2 hours and 51 minutes with two intermissions.

The Sleeping Beauty

Choreography: Marius Petipa with additional choreography by Sir Frederick Ashton

Production: Ninette de Valois (after Nicolai Sergeyev's 1939 production)

Music: Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky

Lighting Design: John Cuff

Set and Costume Design: David Walker

About Boston Ballet

Since 1963, Boston Ballet's internationally acclaimed performances of classical, neo-classical, and contemporary ballets, combined with a dedication to world-class dance education and community initiative programs, have made the institution a leader in its field, with a 53-year history of promoting excellence and access to dance.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Executive Director Meredith Max Hodges, the Company maintains a diverse repertoire, ranging from full-length ballets to new works by some of today's finest choreographers. Boston Ballet's second company, Boston Ballet II, is comprised of dancers who gain experience by performing with the Company and independently, presenting special programs to audiences throughout the Northeast.

Boston Ballet School, the official school of Boston Ballet, has a long-standing dedication to providing exceptional dance education and ballet training to students across three studios in Boston, Newton, and the North Shore. Led by Director Margaret Tracey, the School reaches more than 5,000 students (toddler to adult) each year through its four core programs: Children's Program, Classical Ballet Program, Adult Dance Program, and Pre-Professional Program.

Boston Ballet's Department of Education and Community Initiatives (ECI) provides programming, events, and activities that connect the community to dance. ECI reaches more than 4,000 individuals in Boston, North Shore, and the surrounding communities each year through Citydance, ECI on Location, Adaptive Dance, and other community programs.

For more information, please visit bostonballet.org.

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