

QueenslandBallet

Media Release

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The Sleeping Beauty to Delight Audiences



Brisbane audiences are soon to be wowed by three international ballet stars joining Queensland Ballet's renowned dancers for the Company's season of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Opening on 23 October, Greg Horsman's *The Sleeping Beauty* will feature performances by Romanian born ballerina Alina Cojocaru, Cuban Victor Estevez and Chinese star Chi Cao, continuing Queensland Ballet's tradition of bringing world class performances to Queensland audiences.

Queensland Ballet Artistic Director Li Cunxin said *The Sleeping Beauty* was the

Company's most anticipated production of the 2015 season due to its classical appeal and star power.

"*The Sleeping Beauty* is a quintessential classical ballet, a family favourite and one that has certainly stood the test of time. It has everything that makes a wonderful fairytale: a princess, a kiss by a charming prince, a wicked fairy, even a dragon," Mr Li said.

"We are delighted to be bringing this story to the stage and to be performing Greg Horsman's production.

"This ballet is one of the most challenging in the classical repertoire and the lead role of Aurora is perhaps the greatest and most demanding ballerina role.

"Our guest Alina, is widely considered to be one of the best Auroras dancing today and it is certainly a coup to have her performing with us. A number of our Principal Dancers will also be dancing this incredible role and are very much looking forward to it.

"It's also a great privilege to welcome Victor and Chi to our season. Victor is currently Principal Dancer with the Ballet Nacional de Cuba and Chi is Principal with the Royal Birmingham Ballet."



Queensland Premier and Minister for the Arts Annastacia Palaszczuk said *The Sleeping Beauty* paired Mr Li with Chi Cao, the dancer who played him onscreen in the 2009 film *Mao's Last Dancer*.

"It's an extraordinary opportunity for Queensland audiences to see the combined efforts of these two talents," she said.

"I look forward to being whisked away by the magic of this classic fairy tale."

Choreographer Greg Horsman, who is also the Company's Ballet Master, has a personal connection to this ballet that he first created while working with Royal New Zealand Ballet.

"As a 12 year-old, *The Sleeping Beauty* was the first ballet I saw performed, an event that would set my path in life," Mr Horsman said.

"I saw the incredible Rudolf Nureyev perform as the Prince and I was mesmerised, not only by Nureyev's dancing, but by the ballet itself.

"I hope my staging of this classic will captivate our audiences and allow them to see afresh this gem of a ballet and, who knows, perhaps inspire someone like I was all those years ago."

The Sleeping Beauty brings Tchaikovsky's famous music together with majestic sets and Renaissance-inspired costumes.

Horsman's production honours tradition and sparkles with spectacular choreography and a cast of fanciful characters.

The narrative follows the well-known story of the Princess Aurora who, on her 16th birthday, pricks her finger on a rose and succumbs to a spell cast upon her at her christening by the wicked fairy Carabosse.

The Lilac Fairy intervenes and causes an enchanted sleep to descend upon the palace. After one hundred years, Aurora is woken from her slumber by a Prince's gentle kiss, and joyous celebrations follow.

Mr Cunxin said audiences could look forward a truly enchanting experience of classical ballet at its best with *The Sleeping Beauty*.

"We're so pleased to continue this year's theme bringing fairytales to life on stage for our audiences and we're certain this season will be a highlight for many.

"This is the perfect ballet for everyone from families with children to die-hard ballet fans."

Queensland Ballet gratefully acknowledges the support of the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland in enabling performances by Alina Cojocar and Victor Estevez.

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