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Evergreen City Ballet's "The Sleeping Beauty"

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Dean Speer	Post subject: Evergreen City Ballet's "The Sleeping Beauty" Posted: Mon May 10, 2010 12:13 pm
<div data-bbox="94 1073 237 1108" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">offline</div> Joined: Wed Apr 12, 2000 11:01 pm Posts: 516 Location: Seattle, WA. USA	<p data-bbox="407 1073 1179 1209"><i>My Beautiful Year</i> Evergreen City Ballet's "The Sleeping Beauty," 28 March 2010 Ikea Performing Arts Center, Renton, Washington by Dean Speer</p> <p data-bbox="407 1251 1516 1423">Large-scale ballets are a major undertaking by any company and Evergreen City Ballet has to be lauded for nicely tackling one of ballet's most iconic, "The Sleeping Beauty." It's also a point of pride to hold your head up high when you know your company is at risk of audiences comparing and contrasting with other productions in the region. This production comes about a month on the heels of Pacific Northwest Ballet's.</p> <p data-bbox="407 1465 1516 1713">With choreography by its founding director, Wade Walthall, filling the medium-sized Ikea stage attached to the historic Renton High School [where the great ballet pedagogue of the Dance Theatre of Harlem School, Karel Shook, attended], Evergreen City Ballet gave us a delightful reading that made full use of its bank of members of its company, advanced dancers from its academy performance division and production team. Guest dancer former PNB soloist Oleg Gorboulev brought his considerable and elegant ballet breeding and experience to the role of the Prince. His clean, easy lines and technique were a complement.</p> <p data-bbox="407 1755 1516 1927">His experience, too, was helpful when partnering Aurora - Jackie McConnell - who didn't get quite enough power and push going for her <i>en dedans piqué</i> turns into the Act III grand pas de deux fish dives, [she ended up facing toward the ceiling, rather than the stage floor] so he gallantly and discreetly pushed her around into the correct position, not once but twice, the fish dives being repeated thrice.</p> <p data-bbox="407 1969 1458 1997">McConnell did essay very well her other assignments of the afternoon including the Rose</p>

Adagio and its long balance en attitude, the Act II Vision and Awakening Pas de Deux where the Prince is led by the Lilac Fairy to see Aurora and then fight Carabosse - Wisten Klein - for her.

My only staging fuss is a story one - the Lilac Fairy can save Aurora from Carabosse's death curse only because she is interrupted in giving her christening gift to the baby Aurora. After the curse, the Lilac Fairy alters the curse by lifting it from death into life and saying instead she shall sleep. In Walthall's staging, I believe I espied the Lilac Fairy actually completing the giving of her gift before being interrupted by Carabosse's very dramatic and theatrical entrance. In other versions, the Lilac Fairy gestures to her attendant to stop in mid-stride and therefore the gift is never given.

Special recognition should be given to the wardrobe, set and lighting design teams for their talent and work. The costumes were especially beautiful creations.

My wish for this suburban company is that as they continue to grow, are able to find a larger venue - in terms of stage size - that will parallel their artistic ascendancy and that, importantly, they add live music to all performances whenever and wherever possible. In this case, a grand piano using the piano reduction of the full score would have worked and been my preference. They do use the Auburn Symphony for their "Nutcracker" run while performing in the city of that name, so it would be great to at least have piano elsewhere.

I had not been able to see Evergreen City Ballet since their home base moved from Auburn to Renton and it was a pleasurable afternoon spent in the company of those who love the ballet, believe its intrinsic value and to enjoy the awakening of another production of "The Sleeping Beauty."

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