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HoustonBallet  
50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON

PRESENTS

# the Sleeping Beauty

**HOUSTON BALLET PRESENTS BEN STEVENSON'S THE SLEEPING BEAUTY**

**WHO:** Houston Ballet

**WHAT:** Ben Stevenson's *The Sleeping Beauty*

**WHERE:** Wortham Theater Center

**WHEN:** February 27 – March 8, 2020

**TICKETS:** \$25-\$200, On Sale Now at [houstonballet.org](http://houstonballet.org) or 713.227.ARTS(2787)

## February 27-March 8, 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				27 7:30 PM	28 7:30 PM	29 1:30 PM 7:30 PM
1 2:00 PM	2	3	4	5	6 7:30 PM	7 1:30 PM 7:30 PM
8 2:00 PM						

**HOUSTON, TEXAS [February 10, 2020]** — Houston Ballet begins its 2020 performances with *The Sleeping Beauty* by former Artistic Director, Ben Stevenson OBE. This story ballet, as part of Houston Ballet's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season lineup, honors the lasting legacy Stevenson built from 1976-2003.

Stevenson's *The Sleeping Beauty* is recognized as one of the supreme achievements of classical ballet. He first staged his ballet on Houston Ballet in 1978 with costumes and sets by Peter Farmer. The opening of the organization's new performance venue in 1987 presented Stevenson with the opportunity to create a lavish new production to fill the grand Wortham Theater Center stage. His new version premiered in 1990, and Houston Ballet continues to perform this version 30 years later. Stevenson's interpretation of the classical French fairytale by Charles Perrault exquisitely tells the story of the beautiful princess, Aurora, who is cursed by an evil fairy, Carabosse. In a story of good versus evil, the Lilac Fairy bestows a gift upon Aurora to change her fate to sleep for a hundred years and awake with true love's kiss.

The ballet presents the opportunity for dancers to share all aspects of their craft. One of the greatest challenges of nineteenth-century choreography, the first act's famous "Rose Adagio" demands great stamina, technical skill and mastery of classical style from its Aurora.

"It's a very challenging but rewarding part," says Principal Dancer Yurkio Kajiya. "To embody 16-year old Auora's youth and delicateness while executing such strong and precise movement is a feat that you work very hard to achieve."

In all the magic and light, the contrasting Carabosse brings a new depth of raw emotion. Excluded from Aurora's Baptism, Carabosse swiftly moves from victim to villain.

"She's one of my favorite roles," says Principal Dancer Melody Mennite. "She owns her power and, in her mind, is seeking justice for her ostracism. She's a force of nature in a dramatic black tutu, and you can't help feeling empowered when you are her."

The legendary Desmond Heeley superbly gave these dancers the ideal looks and scenes with his enchanting designs. Stevenson has remarked that Heeley was his favorite designer to work with, and audiences can see why with this prime example of his stunning work. A master at capturing light, his costumes and sets fill the stage with eye catching dazzle.

As part of the organization's Education and Community Engagement initiatives, the public is welcomed to Houston Ballet's Center for Dance on February 11 at 7:15 p.m. for a Dance Talk about Stevenson's *The Sleeping Beauty*. During this free event, they will explore the timeless tale of good and evil from the 21st century perspective and identify moments in the story and ballet that have significance for dancers and audiences alike.

Join Houston Ballet for *The Sleeping Beauty*, onstage February 27 – March 8, by visiting [HoustonBallet.org](http://HoustonBallet.org) or by calling 713.227.ARTS(2787).

## ABOUT HOUSTON BALLETT

Celebrating 50 years of creativity, Houston Ballet has evolved from a Company of 16 dancers to one of 61 dancers with a budget of \$33.9 million and an endowment of \$79.2 million (as of June 2019), making it the country's fifth largest ballet company. Its Center for Dance is a \$46.6 million state-of-the-art performance space that opened in April 2011 and remains the largest professional dance facility in America. Houston Ballet's reach is global, touring in renowned theaters in Dubai, London, Paris, Moscow, Spain, Montréal, Ottawa, Melbourne, New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and more.

Houston Ballet attracts prestigious leaders in dance. Australian choreographer Stanton Welch AM has served as Artistic Director of Houston Ballet since 2003, raising the level of the Company's classical technique and commissioning works from dance legends such as Julia Adam, George Balanchine, Aszure Barton, Christopher Bruce, Alexander Ekman, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Edwaard Liang, Trey McIntyre and Justin Peck. Executive Director James Nelson serves as the administrative leader of the organization, a position he assumed in February 2012 after serving as the Company's General Manager for more than a decade.

Beyond its stage presence, Houston Ballet maintains a strong foothold in continuing to foster a love for dance in future generations. Its Education and Community Engagement program reaches more than 70,000 individuals in the Houston area annually. Houston Ballet Academy trains more than 1,000 students every year, producing more than 50 percent of the elite athletes that comprise Houston Ballet's current Company.

For more information on Houston Ballet, visit [houstonballet.org](http://houstonballet.org).

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