

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC,  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA AT THE LAUNCH OF “SLEEPING  
BEAUTY” FOR THE TASMANIAN CLASSICAL BALLET  
COMPANY’S 2012 SEASON AT THE DERWENT  
ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE, THURSDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2012.**

Once again it is a great pleasure for me and my wife to have been invited to launch a season of ballet for the Tasmanian Classical Ballet Company. This year it will be *Sleeping Beauty*; a ballet that tells a story that has its origins as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> century when it was told as a Norse saga, *Volsuunga*. Over the centuries this story, which was more than a little brutal and macabre went through various changes. However:

“In the early 1800s, the German folklorists, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, modified the fairy tale in their story of ‘Dornroschen’ (Little Briar Rose). This story has none of the macabre features of earlier tales, has only half the plot, and has a true ‘fairy tale ending’. The story reaches its denouement when the prince awakens Rose with a kiss. Shortly afterwards, they marry and ‘live happily ever after.’”<sup>i</sup>

Tchaikovsky was attracted to this tale and during the period from October 1888 to May 1889 he set to work composing what was to become one of the world’s most famous ballets. Tchaikovsky was obviously pleased with his labours for on completion he wrote “It seems to me ... that the music from this ballet will be amongst my best works. The subject is so poetical, it is so suited for music, that in

composing it I was utterly absorbed, and wrote with a fervour and passion which always result in work of merit.”

He continued:

“*The Sleeping Beauty* may be the best of all my compositions, and yet I wrote it improbably quickly”<sup>ii</sup>.

Last year in accordance with its objectives, the Tasmanian Classical Ballet Company took its production “Swan Lake” on a state-wide tour of performances and workshops involving 10 performances in 6 locations and visits to schools in regional and metropolitan areas including schools in disadvantaged communities, reaching nearly 1,200 students. The programme this year for *Sleeping Beauty* will be every bit as extensive as last year.

However, there is some additional and important news for this season. Last year was the first time that ballet had been performed in the DEC for 20 years when Boshoi Ballet performed there. But all that has now changed. Thanks to the generous in-kind support and encouragement of the Glenorchy Council and the Derwent Entertainment Centre management the Tasmanian Ballet Company can now call the Derwent Entertainment “Home”. It is not only a venue where it can afford to mount its annual ballet, but it is also a place where the Company can rehearse and store its props and costumes. I understand that a spin off from this storage arrangement is that the Reddish’s get their garden shed back!!

Lovers of classical ballet may be a little bemused to see that their favourite classical ballet company will be sharing its new home this year with events as diverse as a world boxing title; a Tasmanian Roller Derby; Lenny Kravitz with the Cranberries and Wolfmother; Riverdance; Guy Sebastian and the Bride Tasmania Wedding Exhibition. But hey - why not? The DEC is a great entertainment venue and I am sure that as the Tasmanian Ballet Company's new home it will prove to be a great success. We all thank the Glenorchy Council and the Management here and wish the Company good luck for the move and every success for the forthcoming 2012 season which I now officially launch.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://john-k-davis.suite101.com/the-story-of-sleeping-beauty-a92332>, accessed 17 February 2012.

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.tchaikovsky-research.net/en/Works/Ballets/TH013/index.html>, accessed 17 February 2012.