



Sydney Morning Herald
 Saturday 27/6/2009
 Page: 21
 Section: Arts & Entertainment
 Region: Sydney Circulation: 359,000
 Type: Capital City Daily
 Size: 135.69 sq.cms.
 Published: MTWTFSS-

Brief: TQO

Nureyev's dream brought back to life

■ DANCE

LA BAYADERE

Queensland Performing Arts Centre, June 24
 Until July 4
 Reviewed by Jill Sykes

PARIS OPERA BALLET'S production of *La Bayadere* is truly breathtaking for the exceptional dancing, magnificent staging and attention to detail. In its brief Brisbane season it links Australia with the glory days of Russian ballet and its original choreographer, Marius Petipa, through the Kirov Ballet and Rudolf Nureyev, who produced it (with additional choreography) in his dying days.

There is a sense that Nureyev was honoured by getting everything he asked for, including an elephant, sumptuous costumes and sets richly endowed with the fluted domes, decorative arabesques, turquoise and gold of Central Asia.

Above all, he had dancers who could work through the extraordinary discipline of classical ballet technique to create theatrical magic. Nearly two decades later that situation remains.

Being an icon of classical ballet, *La Bayadere* has all the conflicting elements that make the art form so endearing: graceful ensembles, dazzling solos, a silly story, long dance sequences that go nowhere, formidable technical challenges and folksy

routines that do little more than animate the costumes. It takes a company of this rare quality to bring it alive.

The themes of love declared and betrayed, jealousy, murder and drug-induced escapism were played out deftly. Aurelie Dupont was the tragic Nikiya, consumed by her love for Solor (Herve Moreau). It was a partnership of fabulous technique bound by theatrical intimacy. Dorothee Gilbert gave a glittering performance of the vengeful Gamzatti.

But it is the depth of supporting roles that give them their springboard: solos, duets, trios, a couple of show-stoppers like the golden idol, others simply woven into the tapestry of action that holds the piece together when done so well. At this level of performance their inclusion makes sense; anything less and they look like padding.

And then there are the ensembles – almost all crisply synchronised, just a couple revealing that even the Paris Opera Ballet is not perfect. The Kingdom Of The Shades, the ballet's most famous sequence of 32 dancers in white tutus stepping into view one by one, in arabesque, was precise and enthralling.

Tunefully accompanied by the Queensland Orchestra playing the Minkus score, this production is a benchmark for viewing dance in Australia.