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Right ingredients for a great classic

BALLET
LA BAYADERE

Queensland Performing Arts Centre,
 Until July 4
www.qpac.com.au
Jill Sykes Reviewer

PARIS Opera Ballet's production of *La Bayadere* — *The Temple Dancer* 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 a realistic looking elephant, sumptuous costumes and richly endowed sets.

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. Not only is the movement amazing to watch, it releases a host of sensations in the viewer.

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 animate the costumes. It takes a company of this rare quality to bring it alive.

On opening night, 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

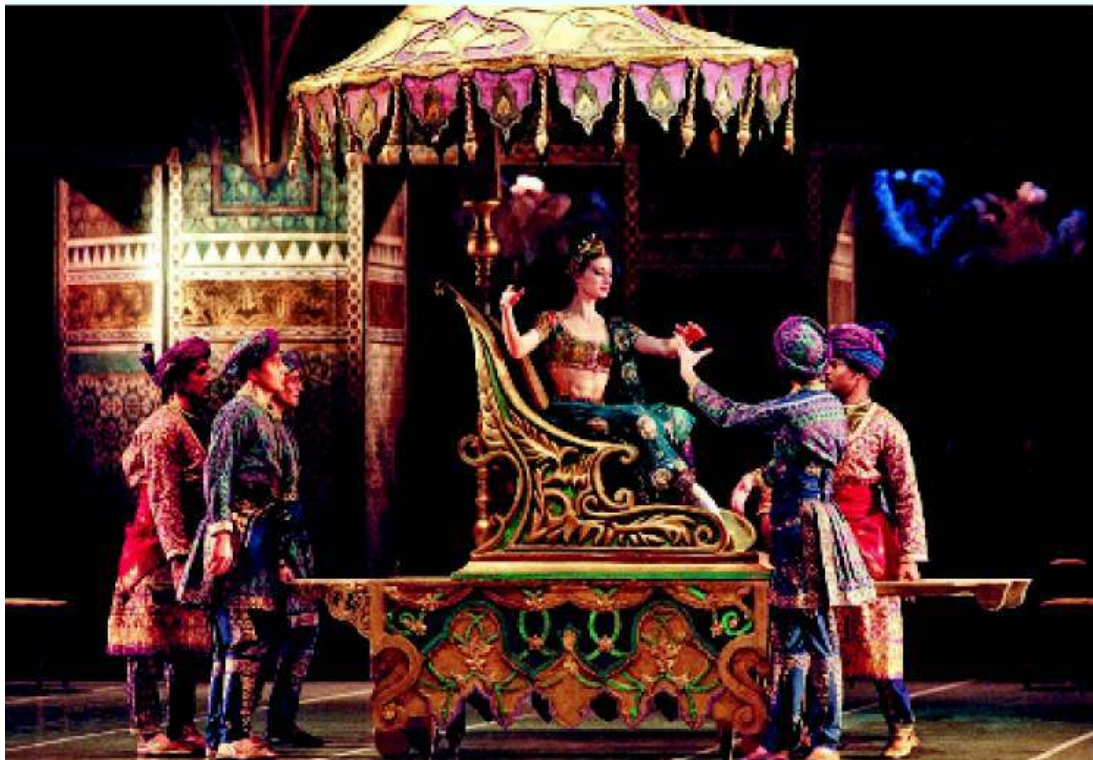
Solor (Herve Moreau) — a partnership of fabulous technique bound by theatrical intimacy — and Dorothee Gilbert gave a glittering performance as Gamzatti.

But it is the depth of supporting roles that give them their springboard: solos, duets, trios, a couple of show-stoppers, others simply woven into the tapestry of action that holds the piece together when done so well.

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.

Accompanied by the Queensland Orchestra playing the Minikus score, this production is a benchmark for dance in Australia.

Jill Sykes flew to Brisbane courtesy of Queensland Tourism.



Theatrical magic: Paris Opera Ballet enthralls with its sumptuous production of *La Bayadere*