

FESTIVAL BALLET THEATRE presents
The Sleeping Beauty
Irvine Barclay Theatre | April 4 & 5, 2009

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. – **Festival Ballet Theatre**, one of Southern California's most vibrant and accomplished ballet companies, will close its 20th anniversary season with an opulent, full-length staging of ***The Sleeping Beauty at Irvine Barclay Theatre***. The beloved classic ballet will feature FBT's professional company dancers and special guests from San Francisco Ballet School's elite Trainee Program. Family-friendly and affordable, two **full-length performances** will be held **Saturday, April 4 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 5 at 2 p.m.** The company will also present a **one-hour, narrated production** designed especially for children ages 3-12 **on Saturday, April 4 at 2 p.m.**

A timeless love story, FBT's heart-warming production was choreographed and directed by Artistic Director **Salwa Rizkalla**. Set to Peter Tchaikovsky's masterpiece, the ballet brings to life fabled storybook favorites including Princess Aurora, Puss-in-Boots, Little Red Riding Hood and the big bad Wolf. Enjoyable for the entire family, this enchanting and ageless classic will feature newly commissioned sets by award-winning San Diego-based artist Sergei Iourov, top recipient at the Center of Architecture and Design's (Osaka, Japan) international competition.

Making their first appearance with Festival Ballet Theatre are **Victoria Luchkina as Princess Aurora** and **Sergey Kheylik as Prince Florimund**. **Luchkina** is a former Principal Dancer with the Theatre Yuri Grigorovich Ballet in Russia, under the artistic direction of Yuri Grigorovich, director of the Bolshoi Ballet. She holds the honored title of Laureate in the 2002 International Ballet Competition, DEBUT, in Russia, and first place in the 2004 Russia Ballet Competition. **Kheylik** is a versatile artist, formerly a dancer with the Vienna State Opera Ballet, a performer with Cirque du Soleil, and a dancer in the hit film *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. His most notable awards include the Hope Prize at the Prix de Lausanne (2000), the Gold Medal at the Vienna International Ballet Competition (2001), and the Gold Medal at the Varna International Competition (2002). **The Lilac Fairy** will be performed by long-time

company principal dancer **Elizabeth Chasteler**, a William Gillespie Scholarship recipient and UC Irvine graduate.

Courtesy of **San Francisco Ballet School Trainee Program**, the program will also highlight two rising stars of ballet who grew up and received their formative training here in Orange County, **Bryn Gilbert** and **Stephen Morse**. **Gilbert** is a former student of Southland Ballet Academy, the official school of Festival Ballet Theatre; an inaugural member of FBT II, Festival Ballet Theatre's junior company; and the 2008 Los Angeles Music Center Spotlight Award Winner. Her technical prowess and beautiful line will be on display as the Enchanted Princess. **Morse**, also a 2008 Los Angeles Music Center Spotlight Award Winner, will be featured as Bluebird.

Saturday, April 4 at 7 p.m. & Sunday, April 5 at 2 p.m.

Tickets: \$38 for adults, \$33 for children, seniors and students

Saturday, April 4 at 2 p.m. – all tickets \$20 for the one-hour, narrated family show.

To order tickets:

Call Irvine Barclay Theatre box office: **949.854.4646**

Online purchases: visit **thebarclay.org** or **ticketmaster.com**

Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover accepted.

Download high-resolution images at: <http://press.thebarclay.org>

Irvine Barclay Theatre is located at **4242 Campus Drive** [Bridge and West Peltason Roads in Irvine]

To learn more about Festival Ballet Theatre, go to **festivalballet.org**

Synopsis:

The Sleeping Beauty is the story of the a long-wished for beautiful princess who, at her christening, is bestowed with enchanting gifts by the magical beings of her father's kingdom – the Fairies of Serenity; Benevolence; Generosity; Happiness; Temperament and, the embodiment of all that is good and kind, the Lilac Fairy. Furious at being overlooked, the Evil Fairy Carabosse places a curse on Princess Aurora as her "gift," proclaiming that upon reaching her 16th birthday the Princess will prick her finger on a spindle and die. The Lilac Fairy, although unable to completely reverse the spell, vows that it will be only partly true. The Princess will prick her finger, but she will not die. Instead, she and the Court will fall into a deep, 100-year long sleep until a handsome Prince awakens her with a kiss. On her 16th birthday, the curse is fulfilled: the Princess pricks her finger, and falls into a long sleep. Upon the passing of 100 years, Prince Florimund finds our sleeping heroine, breaking the 100 years of sleep when he kisses the Princess and declares his love for her. The King and Queen are overjoyed and call for a magnificent royal wedding. Fabled storybook characters such as the White Cat and

Puss-in-Boots, the Enchanted Princess and Bluebird, as well as Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf all take part in a celebration of love and the triumph of good over evil. And, yes, everyone lives happily ever after. Set to the music of Peter Tchaikovsky, *The Sleeping Beauty* was first performed by the Russian Imperial Ballet in January 1890.

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Company History

Under the direction of Salwa Rizkalla, since its founding in 1988, Festival Ballet Theatre has become one of Southern California's most vibrant and accomplished regional ballet companies. Celebrating its 20th anniversary of artistic service to Orange County, FBT is dedicated to presenting works that epitomize the artistry of professional ballet, offering cultural awareness of dance through educational programs, and nurturing a creative environment for some of our county's most talented dancers. Boasting a roster of impressive talent, the company's productions also feature internationally acclaimed guest artists from American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, the Kirov Ballet, New York City Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, San Francisco Ballet and Scottish Ballet.

Festival Ballet Theatre strives to enrich the experience of Orange County's dance audience by highlighting the work of world-renowned guest and resident choreographers who have received critical acclaim for original ballets around the globe. With reverence for masterpieces of the past and a clear focus on developing future tour de forces, FBT presents a varied repertoire of full-length classical ballets including *Coppélia*, *Don Quixote*, *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*; as well as contemporary works by some of the nation's most sought-after choreographers. FBT was also the bid winner of Ballet Pacifica's Assets Auction, purchasing the dissolved company's name, sets, costumes and photography archive in order to preserve Ballet Pacifica's rich dance legacy for our community.

Aspiring to the heights of artistic excellence, Festival Ballet Theatre simultaneously attracts the best in professional dance to its home-base while sending its own dancers out as artistic ambassadors to the nation. FBT's significant work has been recognized with a 2001 Arts Orange County Award for *Outstanding Arts Organization of the Year*.

Salwa Rizkalla, Artistic Director

Salwa Rizkalla's artistic vision and community involvement led to the creation of Festival Ballet Theatre, and its precursor Southland Ballet Academy. Her credentials as a classical ballet dancer include an impressive list of leading roles in well-known classical ballets, as well as appearances in original contemporary pieces. During her distinguished career as a professional dancer, Rizkalla had the privilege of working under the direction of world-renowned choreographers Leonid Lavrovsky and Serge Lifar. Trained in the Russian Vaganova method and having studied with ballet masters of the Bolshoi and the Kirov, Rizkalla holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Ballet Pedagogy. In addition to her responsibilities as the artistic director of Festival Ballet Theatre and her busy teaching schedule at Southland Ballet Academy, Rizkalla was a faculty member of several area institutions, including Goldenwest College and the Huntington Beach Academy for the Performing Arts. A fully credentialed California teacher, she has been a dedicated educator, a tireless promoter of the arts, and an active participant in the cultural life of her community for more than 25 years. Her contributions have been recognized by The Orange County Music and Arts Administrators and Orange County Performing Arts Center with an *Orange County Arts Educator of the Year Award* for Secondary Dance (2003). Youth America Grand Prix has awarded Rizkalla *Outstanding Teacher* accolades several years running, including current year 2009.