

Cinderella moves to a condo



The setting may be different and her stepsisters may be Ah-Lians but Cinderella still gets her prince in this modern version of the classical ballet.
PHOTO: TAN NGIAP HENG

The Singapore Dance Theatre's revival of Cinderella sets it in modern Singapore

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arts reporter

The fourth staging of British choreographer Graham Lustig's modern makeover of Cinderella is set to cement it as a Singapore classic.

Come next Friday, local audiences can revisit the fairy tale with a Singaporean twist as staged by the Singapore Dance Theatre.

Expect tai-tai stepmothers, Ah-Lian stepsisters and lecherous dance instructors in this classical ballet.

It will feature a similar cast as the 2004 version, with Xia Hai Ying and Chihiro Uchida sharing the role of Cinderella and Ravenna Tucker playing the evil stepmother.

Cinderella was also previously staged by the dance theatre in 1996 and 1998.

Said its artistic director, Janek Schergen, 56: "We are staging it again because it has always been so successful. It is a piece which Singapore audiences like so much. Also, we thought it would be nice to put on something happy at the beginning of the year."

Scherger took over as artistic director after the dance theatre's co-founder Goh Soo Khim stepped down from the post last year.

Even though this is a restaged production, it costs over \$300,000 to put on because the sets, which were falling apart, had to be rebuilt.

In this version of Cinderella, the story unfolds in a high-rise condominium where a T-shirt-clad Cinderella lives with her ostentatious tai-tai stepmother.

The second act plays out in a lavish costume ball, where partygoers are draped in extravagant bird and insect costumes.

In the third act, the Prince goes looking for Cinderella with a trip around the world, visiting Arabia and India.

Back in the real world, the Singapore Dance Theatre is hoping for a real-life fairy godmother to fund its future productions. Together with the Singapore Council of Women's Organisation, it will be holding a fund-raising gala dinner tonight at Shangri-La hotel. Proceeds go to the dance theatre.

Titled the Cinderella Ball, arts patrons can donate sums of \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$20,000 for tables of 10. Excerpts from Cinderella will be staged at the event, where a three-course Western dinner will be served.

Those interested can contact the dance theatre directly.

Scherger is optimistic that Cinderella will attract new audiences as well as those who will want to savour a familiar favourite.

He said: "We often compare going to ballet performances like having a meal. Does it mean that if you eat something once, you'll never have it again for the rest of your life?"
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hook it

CINDERELLA

Who: Singapore Dance Theatre

Where: Esplanade Theatre

When: Next Friday and Saturday at 8pm, March 8 at 3pm

Admission: \$25 to \$138 from Sistic (go to www.sistic.com.sg or call 6348-5555). Eligible for 50 per cent discount under the Keppel Nights Subsidy scheme