

Ballet Premiere

Beautiful return to romance with “La Sylphide”

Ensemble of the Split Croatian National Theatre and choreographer Karina Elver receive standing ovations

Decision of the director to include one of the oldest preserved white ballets into the repertoire is worthy of praise

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Despite his visible trepidation, Igor Kirov, new director of the Split ballet, was overjoyed after the premier performance of the *La Sylphide*, one of the oldest preserved romantic white ballets. And rightfully so. His choice of *La Sylphide* and performance of solo artists and members of the ballet ensemble are worthy of every praise.

This was also demonstrated by the demanding, almost always dissatisfied audience attending the premiere, who rewarded the dancers and authors, but most of all the Danish choreographer Karina Elver who brought the choreography of her well-known countryman August Bournonville to the Split stage, with an applause lasting for more than six minutes and a standing ovation. Dancers danced to the music of Herman Severin Løvenskiold which was masterfully performed by the orchestra of the Split Croatian National Theatre, directed by maestro Hari Zlodre. The role of *La Sylphide* (the sylph in love with the Scottish peasant James) was masterfully performed at the premiere by Hazuki Tanase, who, like a snowflake, magically glided across the stage, as if not touching the ground,

demonstrating at the same time her acting skills. For, this ballet, which brings us back to some now long gone romantic times in which we used to read and watch black-and-white movies, in addition to dancing skills which, according to Danish dance school, places the emphasis on the leg movements, also requires acting and mimicking skills. Role of James, the Scottish peasant, was well performed by Artiom Žusov, and the entire ballet ensemble provided the audience with great enjoyment through their efforts to show their enviable training. The dancers brought us back to the time of the “old” theatre, in which stories and fairy tales used to be watched, in which one would forget their daily struggles, the realm of magic and illusion, of spirits, witches and elves, and the extremely vivid costumes and fantastic scenography contributed greatly to the this wonderful fairy-tale, performed in two acts.

Solo artists and members of the ballet skilfully and very graciously danced on their toe tips and the real “revelation” was Nikša de Marchi, who played the old witch Madge. He brought a real breath of fresh air by developing the character of the witch in great detail, rising above everyone else with regard to the acting performance. The classical ballet *La Sylphide*, which contains elements of folklore, will without a doubt remain a part of the repertoire of the Split Theatre for a long time to come, because its performers deserve no less.

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Hazuki Tanase, in the leading role of this attractive performance