

When the (ballet) shoe fits...

 By [Debbie Hathway](#)

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Dance fans who love a good fairytale will enjoy Cape Town City Ballet's production of *Cinderella* at the Artscape Opera House in Cape Town until 19 February 2023.



Leane Theunissen in Cape Town City Ballet's *Cinderella*. Photo by Joan Ward

Principal ballerina Kirstel Paterson took the role of Cinderella on opening night, excelling in her characterisation of the kind, patient, positive, cheerful, hard-working, and determined stepsister to Violet (Mervyn Williams) and Daffodil (Marcel Meyer), whose personalities are in stark contrast to hers.

Generally depicted as scheming and cruel in their treatment of Cinderella, who is forced to dress in rags to suit her role as a kitchen maid in the home they share, their hilarious dramatics steal the show. Williams, a Cape Town City Ballet stalwart, and Meyer, a multi award-winning actor, were in fine form, contributing a level of comic timing and acting ability crucial to the ballet's success. Delighted giggles from the children and laughter from parents and chaperones in the audience were their rewards.



Mathias Dingman and Kirstel Paterson in Cape Town City Ballet's Cinderella, Photo by Joan Ward

Paterson was typically composed, precise and fluid in her movements in the first act, captivating us with her floating arms, soft hands and beautiful footwork. The perfect foil to her so-called ugly sisters, she was a joy to watch as she processed the emotional journey of wanting to go to the Prince's ball but not having a dress, then being given one by Buttons (Elvis Nonjeke), the butler, only to have it destroyed by her sisters.

The appearance of her Fairy Godmother (Leane Theunissen) gave Cinderella hope of a dream coming true with her subsequent transformation from kitchen maid to belle of the ball. It's a magical sequence, and Theunissen delivered a faultless performance.

Act 2 featured the much-anticipated ball with a set that prompted oohs and aahs from the audience. Jordan Roelfze, as the Jester, produced a superb performance, landing every jump and turn with aplomb – a pleasure to watch. Actor Craig Hedderwick as Count Fossil and David Maluleka as Marquis de Conceit were charismatic suitors for Violet and Daffodil.



Cape Town City Ballet's Cinderella. Photo by Joan Ward

Mathias Dingman, principal at Birmingham Royal Ballet, danced the role of the Prince that night. Both Paterson and Dingman delivered convincing performances alone, but together they fell short of expectations. They were often out of sync in the pas de deux, perhaps needing more time to find harmony and balance in their partnership and a sense of trust that enabled them to execute lifts confidently without seeming tentative.

Having said that – the climax in Act 3 was brilliantly done, with Dingman managing an extended lift with Paterson having to draw on her core strength to adopt the required line.



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The road to happily ever after from the time the clock begins to strike midnight, signalling the time for Cinderella to take flight in her glittering carriage, causing her to lose a sparkling slipper in the process, and leading to the Prince's later search for the matching one was as entertaining as ever.

Alternate casts for the lead roles include Vadim Muntagirov, principal of The Royal Ballet, and Tatiana Melnik, principal of the Hungarian National Ballet, who will perform on Saturday, 11 February, Tuesday, 14 February and Friday, 17 February, to accompaniment by the orchestra.

This season of Cinderella features choreography by Veronica Paeper, costume and décor design by Peter Cazalet and lighting design by Wilhelm Disbergen. The ballet is performed to music by Sergei Prokofiev, with a libretto by the Brothers Grimm 1812.

Bookings can be made at Artscape Dial-A-Seat 021 421 7695 or through [Computicket](https://www.computicket.co.za/). Prices start from R175 for performances with recorded music and R200 for those with the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra. There are alternate casts for other performances, subject to change.

ABOUT DEBBIE HATHWAY

Debbie Hathway is an award-winning writer, with a special interest in luxury lifestyle (watches, jewellery, travel, property investment) and the arts.

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