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## Moscow Festival Ballet earns standing ovation in McCain with 'Sleeping Beauty'

### McCain Performance Series concludes spring season with classic fairy tale ballet

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The 2011-12 season of the McCain Performance Series ended with a bang on Sunday, as the Moscow Festival Ballet treated students and Manhattan residents to the classic ballet "The Sleeping Beauty."

"The Sleeping Beauty" was created in 1890 by famed choreographer Marius Petipa with music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The dance brought the story to life with their choreography, elaborate costumes and set design.

"I like how they use dance and music to portray what words can't," said Sam Haugland, senior in physics.

Because there are no words in ballet, the performers tell the story through dance, gestures and highly stylized movement. Even the performers onstage who were not dancing participated by gesturing and saluting the other players or interacted with one another by miming. Every movement and gesture was done broadly and purposefully to evoke the emotion of the scene and characters. Even actors moving chairs onto the stage for others used carefully choreographed movements. No detail was left out.

Nora Alqahtani, freshman in architecture, said this was her first experience with ballet and she was impressed by it. She said her favorite part of the play was the end of Act I, where the Princess pricks her finger on the fateful spindle and falls asleep for 100 years because of a magic spell from an evil fairy. Before she falls asleep, she runs around and shows the hurt finger to all of the courtiers on stage, which Alqahtani said she found funny.

There were other funny moments in the play, such as the wedding scene at the end when other fairy tale characters, such as Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, come to dance at the wedding.

A popular character in this act was Puss 'n Boots, who teased another dancer until they both pawed at each other like fighting cats, drawing laughter and applause from the audience.

Amelia Fortmayer, senior in physics, said Puss 'n Boots and the Wolf were her favorite characters. This was also her first time seeing a full-length ballet, and she enjoyed the story.

"I like to see the athleticism it takes," Fortmayer said. "They make it look effortless when obviously it's not."

Prince Charming's entrance in Act II, however, drew one of the biggest responses from the audience. He crossed the stage in a series of very high leaps and spins, and the audience clapped to show their approval. Through the rest of the play, he was frequently applauded for his solo dances and duets with the Princess.

Both the Princess and the Lilac Fairy, who saves the Princess from death and then leads Prince Charming to her rescue, were frequently applauded for their work. Toward the end of the ballet, the audience began applauding them whenever they made an entrance.

The Moscow Festival Ballet earned a standing ovation for their performance.

Christina Eurich, who was in town visiting from Germany, saw the ballet with Brenton Cherry, Fort Riley resident, and said her favorite character was the Princess and she loved the costumes. Eurich said she enjoys ballet because of the classical music and because it encourages viewers to use their imagination.

She said she had seen several ballets at home in Germany, including "Swan Lake" and "The Nutcracker," but this was her first time seeing "The Sleeping Beauty."

Cherry had also attended ballet before in Texas. He said his favorite character was Puss 'n Boots.

"I like how graceful they are," Cherry said.