

17 avril 2014 (1/2)  
(New York City, Etats-Unis)



## JEAN PAUL GAULTIER X BALLET PRELJOCAJ'S SNOW WHITE

*The Joyce Theater presents the New York premiere of Ballet Preljocaj's acclaimed production of Snow White at Lincoln Center later this month. Below, BAZAAR talks to Jean Paul Gaultier, who designed the costumes*

By Kristen Bateman on April 17, 2014

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We all know the familiar story of Snow White – a tale propelled by envy, tension and seduction - focused on the older wicked stepmother and the younger, fairer Snow White. Ballet Preljocaj and Jean Paul Gaultier's Snow White takes the storied tale and gives it a high fashion makeover. Characters leap, bow and twirl in avant-garde, seductive ensembles – some of which appear to take inspiration from Gaultier's classics bustiers and patent leathers.

### What most inspired you about Ballet Preljocaj's production of Snow White?

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I had seen Angelin Preljocaj's work before, at the Theatre Festival in Avignon in the south of France and I have been very impressed. When he contacted me and told me that he was working on Snow White I was quickly seduced by the idea.

I have been very fortunate that I have been able to work with the artists that I admire. Regine Chopinot and Preljocaj for dance, Pedro Almodovar or Luc Besson for film. The list goes on.



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17 avril 2014 (2/2)

(New York City, Etats-Unis)

**Where did you take inspiration from when designing the costumes?**

Angelin explained his idea that the Snow White is a fairy tale and that like all fairy tales it had a dark and sensual side. That was the starting point. The music and the set played the part as well as the dancers. It was easy to dress the prince in a costume inspired by a toreador.

**How does designing for dance or ballet differ than designing 'fashion'?**

When I do my own fashion shows I am the director, script writer and choreographer. When I work with a choreographer I have to work with their direction and their ideas. It's a challenge for me because I have to respond to someone else's vision, but I love that. It gives me fresh air and new energy for my own projects.

**You've referenced fairytales – from The Little Mermaid to Walt Disney's tales in your previous collections. When designing for Snow White, did you use any inspirations from your previous collections?**

I always work with my codes and with my obsessions but they are maybe less obvious here.

**What role do you see the costumes having in the story?**

I hope important, I hope that they could help the dancers find their characters.

**How did the experience of working with Ballet Preljocaj differ from designing for your long-time collaborative partner, French choreographer Regine Chopinot ?**

It can't really be compared as I have worked with Regine continuously for more than ten years. I have enjoyed immensely both experiences.

**Would you like to do more costume design in the future? Which métier would you prefer, if so: film, live theatre, dance?**

At the core I am a fashion designer and I design clothes. I am happiest when I see someone in the street wearing my creations. But I am sure that I will continue to work on different projects outside fashion. It is always a happy coincidence, a fortuitous encounter that has led to collaborations that I have had with dance or cinema.



*Snow White is showing at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center April 23-27th.*



23 avril 2014  
(New York City, Etats-Unis)



**Quoted**  
"Snow White' is the most contemporary fairy tale of all, because the beauty of today's women makes the cross-generational conflict very sharp."  
Angelin Preljocaj

See this very wicked ballet through April 27 in [Brooklyn](#) and [New York](#)

# 'Snow White' is darker in dance

**Ballet.** "Snow White" embraces fantasy while exploring real social issues.

This weekend, one of the world's most popular fairy tales will dance across the stage as part of Lincoln Center's 2014 Spring Gala. But for this Ballet Preljocaj's "Snow White," you might want to leave the kids at home. Angelin Preljocaj devised the show in 2008 to embrace the story's more thought-provoking complexities, such as the conflict of aging and beauty. He worked with fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier on costumes that would help bring this unabashedly dark retelling to life. We spoke with the acclaimed choreographer to understand what inspired his "Snow White."

a dress or a sweater; these are characters. He drew over 60 sketches in less than a week. He works relentlessly, quickly and impulsively. He is full of ideas, some of which may seem odd at first but are ... original and resourceful. ... Snow White's dress is spectacular. Its swaddling aspect represents the childish side of the character, while its double length and revealing silhouette allude to the transition to the condition of woman. The imposing volume of the Queen's skirt allows the dancer to perform gestures (reminiscent of a bullfighter's), with its cape illustrating confrontation.



**Why does this story appeal to you?**

I'm interested in telling stories. I wanted to tell the real story of Snow White, not "the myth" or "the legend" of Snow White. In this tale, there is darkness and violence, and — in my show — even cruelty in some ways, but the Grimm brothers' tales are filled with these, too. ... "Snow White" contains elements inspiring for a choreographer's imagination.

**How was working with a prolific designer like Gaultier on the costumes?**

With "Snow White," I wanted to create an enchanting, magical and fantastic piece. I think the fashion designer who embodies fantasy the best is Jean Paul Gaultier. He had to be the one to create the costumes; it was obvious! Each of his creations tells a story. These aren't simply

**Why focus on themes of women, age and beauty?**

"Snow White" is the most contemporary fairy tale of all, because the beauty of today's women makes the cross-generational conflict very sharp. The wicked stepmother is without doubt the central character in the tale. She is the one I examine through her narcissistic determination not to give up on seduction and her role as a woman, even if it means sacrificing her stepdaughter. The generational discord, which is at the core of "Snow White," is very modern and has a lot to do with the images of women in magazines. Some mothers fight against their age with cosmetic means. In becoming rivals with their own daughters, they somehow resist [the girls'] emerging young beauty.



**Q&A**

**A worldwide message**

**What do you hope audiences take away from this staging of 'Snow White'?**

The piece has already been around the world and has been performed

over 200 times since its creation in 2008. Snow White's legend knows no boundaries and, once again, I hope that New York audiences will be enchanted by the magical and romantic interlude that I've been willing to share with my dancers.

29 avril 2014 (Chicago, Etats-Unis)

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## Preview: Snow White/Ballet Preljocaj

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Sex, violence, murder, revenge, high fashion. Angelin Preljocaj's vision of Snow White delivers the most visceral elements of the Grimm Brothers' tale with delicious aplomb. The woodland nymphs and satyrs who befriend the runaway Snow White are interrupted from sensuous flirtations; the first kiss between Snow White and her prince is deep, long and performed in the horizontal; the disguised evil queen does not offer her poisoned apple for a timid bite, but rams it into Snow White's mouth with shocking force, dragging her across the floor by her head until she falls unconscious; and the grief-stricken prince drags, rolls, spins and tosses about the completely limp Snow White in what must be the most imaginative pas de deux ever staged. Preljocaj commissioned haute couture designer Jean Paul Gaultier to create the costumes, which strike an astonishingly fitting balance between sexy, fanciful, imaginative and ridiculous; it makes one wish to see more merging of runway fashion and movement artistry. This is a fun one, but you might want to take the kids to the Sunday matinee; Friday and Saturday night shows also contain brief nudity. (Sharon Hoyer)

*Ballet Preljocaj at the Harris Theater, 205 East Randolph, (312)334-7777. Friday and Saturday, May 2 and 3 at 7:30pm. Sunday, May 4 at 2pm. \$40-\$95.*

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29 avril 2014  
(Chicago, Etats-Unis)



## Ballet Preljocaj transforms "Snow White" into fairy tale for our time

Fairy tales have long been the bread-and-butter of ballet, but it's a good bet the "Snow White" that will be performed by Ballet Preljocaj at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance this weekend will move beyond the usual interpretations familiar from such works as "The Sleeping Beauty" and "Cinderella."

Created by Angelin Preljocaj, the French choreographer of Albanian origin whose company is based in Aix-en-Provence — and featuring costumes by haute couture designer Jean Paul Gaultier — this contemporary take on the Brothers Grimm classic promises to be sexier and more sinister than the Disney animated version, with brief nudity in the May 2 and 3 evening performances, though not in the May 4 matinee.

Here are some of the intriguing things Preljocaj had to say during a recent chat:

Q: What is it about fairy tales that seems to make them so ideal for ballet?

A: Bodies can evoke things that words can't reach. And most of the interesting things in fairy tales are underneath the surface — connected to some mysterious feelings going on inside the characters that they don't necessarily talk about. This is also why fairy tales are so important for children; they help them understand the world of their imagination.

Q: Why did you choose to turn "Snow White" into a ballet?

A: I think it is a very modern story, especially as it relates to women. Even fifty years ago, a woman of 40 was considered past her prime, and now, with all the progress in cosmetic surgery, and with women generally in better shape as they grow older, women beyond 60 still want to be sexy and express desire. Today, a woman of 45 might have a daughter of 18 and they wear the same things. The psychology is in some ways more complex now than when "Snow White" was written. So I think it is a good moment to explore this story.

Q: What was the first fairy tale ballet you saw?

A: It was the Paris Opera Ballet performing "The Sleeping Beauty." Compared to that, "Snow White" is really a thriller, with much more action. I saw the Disney animated film of "Snow White" as a child, but I didn't look at it again because I was afraid it would influence me.

Q: Why did you choose the music of Gustav Mahler for your score?

A: "Snow White" is a very dark story, but also a romantic one. Mahler's music has that mix of qualities: It is intensely romantic, but also has a modern, somewhat atonal sound.

Q: In your ballet the dwarfs are not dwarfs at all, but miners who can scale a mountain. How did you think about that?

A: I read Bruno Bettelheim's famous book, "The Uses of Enchantment," in which he psychoanalyzed fairy tales. In centuries past, the popular belief was that a dwarf was without sexuality, and that's why in the fairy tale, dwarfs served as protectors for Snow White. I wanted to think about this in a different way.

Q: Why did you choose Jean Paul Gaultier to design the costumes?

A: I wanted the ballet to be a bit antique, but without any specific period, so the imagination could go in many different directions. The costumes take you to two different worlds — the court of the queen, and then a great forest full of flowers and the feeling of a bacchanal.

30 avril 2014 (Chicago, Etats-Unis)

## *Snow White* gets sexed up

French choreographer Angelin Preljocaj's contemporary version features a dominatrix queen and her 20-foot mirror.

By Jena Cutie



*Snow White*

JC CARBONNE

**I**n Angelin Preljocaj's contemporary ballet *Snow White*, the arresting psychological situation is a romantic rivalry between Snow White, the Prince—and Snow White's dominatrix stepmother, the Queen. The choreography rises well above pantomime. The acute, intelligent images are extremely alluring. And the fairy tale's most important scenes—Snow White's apparent demise and her resurrection—register as exhilarating jolts.

Based on the original by the Brothers Grimm, this *Snow White* departs from the narrative most of us know. After the Queen chokes Snow White with a poisoned apple and stalks back to her lair, another woman, Snow White's mother, enters. Placing her hands on either side of her daughter's head, she raises herself with mesmerizing control into an elongated handstand. The ecstatic illusion of infinite stretch continues as both women are hauled into the air; Snow White hangs from her mother's neck and they dangle together like a hinge unscrewed from its jamb. In a later scene, when the Prince lifts Snow White's limp body from her coffin, he leads her in a rhythmic, repetitive caper, then cradles and grasps her. The suggestion of necrophilia, usually blurred in the fairy tale, shocks with its frank perversity.

Thierry Leproust's minimalist set design enhances the mystery and sex appeal of the characters and makes canny use of key props such as the Queen's mirror, a sharp-edged black rectangle that soars 20 feet high to emphasize the extent of her vanity. Jean Paul Gaultier complicates Snow White's innocent reputation by costuming her in a revealing white dress finished with a diapered crotch, a seductive baby.

**📅 *Snow White***  
Through 5/4: Fri-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 2 PM  
Harris Theater for Music and Dance  
205 E. Randolph  
312-337-7777  
[harristheaterchicago.org](http://harristheaterchicago.org)

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Tags: Performing Arts Review, *Snow White*, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Angelin Preljocaj, Thierry Leproust, Jean Paul Gaultier, minimalism, fairy tales, dance, Recommended



01 mai 2014 (Chicago, Etats-Unis)

## Preljocaj And Gaultier Pair Up For An Edgy Snow White



Blanche Neige - Ballet Preljocaj - Virginie Caussin, Emma Gustafsson © JC Carbonne

You may have never used the word 'sexy' to describe a fairy tale ... until now. French choreographer Angelin Preljocaj brings his contemporary dance company to the Harris this weekend with an edgier, sexier *Snow White*. This isn't your typical Disney princess tale, it's a more provocative *Blanche Neige* inspired by the original Grimm fairy tale, with a dark modern twist.

This story ballet will surprise and capture attention from the start with costumes that look more dominatrix than Mickey Mouse, designed by the legendary Jean Paul Gaultier, famous for creating Madonna's iconic cone-shaped bra for her *Blonde Ambition* tour. The choreography itself, set to the symphonies of Gustav Mahler, is filled with breathtaking athleticism and aerial stunts. This isn't your daughter's pretty-pretty-princess ballet. In fact, leave the kiddos at home because some of the performances contain brief nudity (Sunday's matinee will not).

*Angelin Preljocaj's Snow White is presented this weekend only at the Harris Theater (205 E. Randolph Dr.). [Check their website for times.](#) [Tickets are \\$40 to \\$95.](#)*

Contact the [author](#) of this article or email [tips@chicagoist.com](mailto:tips@chicagoist.com) with further questions, comments or tips.

03 mai 2014 (Chicago, Etats-Unis)

Preljocaj's 'Snow White' at the Harris Theater  
DANCE REVIEW: 'Snow White' at the Harris Theater

*Angelin Preljocaj's "Snow White" suggests an alternate universe that is equal parts Disney, Charles Ludlam and the Brothers Grimm at their grimmest. It runs through Sunday at the Harris.*

By Laura Molzahn, Special to the Tribune

11:12 a.m. CDT, May 3, 2014

Angelin Preljocaj's "Snow White" is something of a Frankenstein. Fortunately, it not only lives and breathes—it has a kindly heart.

Preljocaj, who founded Ballet Preljocaj 30 years ago in France, has cobbled together a score from bits and pieces of Mahler symphonies and a sound design of explosions and birdcalls. He's added a few crucial props and set pieces—a magic mirror, a poisoned apple, a glass coffin—and dropped them into minimalist but magical court and nature scenes. Working with a cast of 24, costume designer Jean Paul Gaultier (yes, that Gaultier) creates nymphs and satyrs, vaguely medieval courtiers, Rambo-style Green Berets, a heroine who manages to combine the elegance of Greek tragedy with peek-a-boo cutouts, and a dominatrix evil stepmom.

The blazingly visual result, running through Sunday at the Harris, suggests an alternate universe that's equal parts Disney, Charles Ludlam and the Brothers Grimm at their grimmest. But beneath the crazy exterior beats a heart transfixed by loss and transformation.

\* Maps

\* 205 East Randolph Street, Chicago, IL 60601, USA

In some ways, Thierry Leproust's stunning sets take center stage, in the palace's exquisitely burnished copper wall, in a terrifying shadowy forest, in an imposing rock face pocked with the dwarfs' caves. The only misstep is a group of toadstools resembling free-form '60s furniture, the site of flirtations that recall junior high make-out sessions.

Preljocaj's wide-legged, rocking choreography often suggests folk dance; it's energetic, propulsive, not hugely nuanced. But at times, "Snow White" demands forms of control comparable to what's required in classical and neoclassical dance. The mirror bits must be precisely timed, and the awakening scene—when the Prince flings Snow White around despairingly—requires her to look limp and lifeless while actually moving in invisible slow motion. Tiny Emilie Lalande and her small but sturdy shining knight, Jean-Charles Jousni, are superb.

The early scenes of "Snow White" are too long, and they plunk us down in a relentlessly cynical, sexual universe. It's a relief—and a delight—to come upon the dwarfs in their workaday yet enchanted world, aerial harnesses enabling them to soar over their rocky landscape.

Like all the male characters, the dwarfs desire Snow White. But they also care for her, welcoming her into their circle. Preljocaj's animal characters are likewise innocent—even the evil queen's cats, but especially the woman-stag who, like Snow White's mother, sacrifices herself so the girl may live.


The baby transforms into the glowing woman, and good-byes are not good-byes in this "Snow White," whose vigorous arc ends in the poignant final duet, when the beloved is lost and found at the same moment.



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**INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF DANCE AND MUSIC 2014**

## The enchanting Snow White

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*Pawit Mahasarinand*

Special to *The Nation* [September 15, 2014 1:00 am](#)



Photo/JC Carbonne



### **Ballet Preljocaj's adaptation of the fairy tale is the must-see highlight of Bangkok's 16th Festival of Music and Dance**

THE CURTAIN ROSE on the Bangkok's 16th International Festival of Dance and Music on Saturday night with Teatro Lirico Italiano of Rome and Macedola Opera's world premiere of "Don Giovanni" and many of us are returning to the Thailand Cultural Centre tonight to watch their "La Boheme".

Since the programme announcement of the festival a few months ago, dance fans have been thrilled by the news that Ballet Preljocaj, one of the most internationally acclaimed dance companies in the world, will be making their long-awaited Thailand debut. Two years ago, the French Embassy notified the Bangkok festival organisers that Ballet Preljocaj's "Blanche Neige" ("Snow White") would be performing at the Macao Cultural Centre this month and the Bangkok festival promptly booked them.

In an e-mail interview with *The Nation*, founder and artistic director Angelin Preljocaj explains how he chooses his dancers.

"I look for someone who dances very well and that's different from looking for a dancer, which tends to trigger a pre-conceived image. Dance companies can sometimes be compared to bouquets of flowers - some will only

## THE NATION

15 septembre 2014 (Bangkok, Thaïlande) (2/3)

feature roses and others only tulips. My company is like a flower arrangement. I like variety, which is also necessary because my works vary greatly in style," he says.

Those differences were immediately apparent when I watched "Blanche Neige" on DVD and further underscored when I caught the company's "Ce que j'appelle oubli" at the Biennale de la danse a Lyon two years ago. Studying the company's repertory in greater depth reveals a unique mix of both narrative and abstract works.

"Yes, I need this balance," Preljocaj says. "My writing is rather graphic. My tools are bodies, space and time. In science, fundamental research is an abstract field and some people think it will never be useful but after a while it becomes medicine or technology. I like to work on both sides with my choreographic work: fundamental and abstract research like 'Empty moves' [which recently premiered at Festival Montpellier Danse] feed other projects like 'Snow White' or 'The Nights' [his 2013 creation]. It's essential to diversify your working methods and themes."

Preljocaj says his inspiration for the work came from the Grimms Brothers' tale, Bruno Bettelheim's "La Psychanalyse des contes de fees" and Mahler's symphonies..

"I wanted to tell the 'real story', not the 'myth' or the 'legend', of 'Snow White'. From the very beginning, I decided to follow the version by the Grimm brothers, with just a few personal variations based on my own analysis of the symbols in the tale.

"It's the most contemporary fairy tale of all, because the beauty of today's women makes the cross-generational conflict very sharp.

"Bettelheim describes Snow White as an Oedipus in reverse. The wicked stepmother is without doubt the central character in the tale. I examine her through her narcissistic determination not to give up on seduction and her role as a woman, even if it means sacrificing her stepdaughter.

"As for the music, the magnificent excesses of Mahler's symphonies are of a romantic nature. This music matched the production concept perfectly."

Adding to the excitement are the costumes, designed by none other than couturier Jean Paul Gaultier.

"The generational dispute, which is at the core of 'Snow White', is very modern and has a lot to do with the image of woman conveyed by magazines," Preljocaj explains.

"Nowadays, some mothers fight their age with cosmetics. In becoming rivals of their own daughters, they somehow resist their emerging young beauty, like the wicked Queen, a complex and extreme seduction figure. I wanted this conflict to come to light through the costumes and Jean Paul was the ideal person to do that for me."

"I also wanted to present an enchanting, magical and fantastical piece and he embodies fancy and fantasy better than anybody else. Each of his creations tells a story. They aren't simple dresses or sweaters - they are characters."

The costumes meld perfectly with the sets by Thierry Leproust.

"At the beginning, I had the idea of a palace, a ball and a magic mirror. Thierry proposed several scenery



## THE NATION

15 septembre 2014 (Bangkok, Thaïlande) (3/3)

settings to represent each place. That gave us a first track on which to build the story," he says.

Since its premiere at the Biennale de la danse a Lyon in 2008, Ballet Preljocaj has performed "Blanche Neige" more than 200 times around the world, receiving a great deal of praise and becoming an audience favourite.

This is notwithstanding New York Times' Roslyn Sulcas comments that it's "exactly what you don't expect any self-respecting contemporary-dance choreographer to do. It's a literal retelling of the fairy tale, fit for a ballet company that needs something safe for the box office."

Culturekiosque's Patricia Boccadoro differed, writing of the performance in Paris a few months after the premiere, "Preljocaj's pas de deux are amongst the most beautiful created this century, and those in this ballet were no exception.

"The chic and tasteful decor by Thierry Leproust swept one instantly into a magical land, from the evocative beauty of the sombre forest, leading to the glittering mountain of enchantment worked by the seven dwarfs, who came down from the heights, spiralling through the air on wires in a ballet of immense beauty."

Commenting on the ballet when it was performed in Hong Kong as part of the French May festival four years ago, South China Morning Post's Kevin Ng said: "Preljocaj's narrative is clear, and the drama unfolds logically; the ballet is strong on theatrical effects."

Preljocaj shrugs off both praise and criticism. "I think the legend of 'Snow White' has no boundaries. I hope that Bangkok audiences will be enchanted by the magical and romantic interlude I've been willing to share with my dancers."

Bangkok's 16th International Festival of Dance and Music is supported by Bangkok Bank, Crown Property Bureau, BMW, B Grimm, Bangkok Hospital, Dusit Thani Bangkok, Indorama Ventures, Nation Multimedia, Beiersdorf, PTT, Singha Corporation, Thai Airways, Tourism Authority of Thailand and Ministry of Culture, with additional support for "Blanche Neige" from the French Embassy and BNP Paribas.

### ONE MAGICAL EVENING

Ballet Preljocaj performs "Blanche Neige" at 7.30pm on September 24 at the Thailand Cultural Centre.

Tickets are from Bt800 to Bt3,000.

Find out more at [www.BangkokFestivals.com](http://www.BangkokFestivals.com).

# Purity shrouded IN DARKNESS

THE PRELJOCAJ BALLET OFFERS A SPELLBINDINGLY BLACK TAKE ON THE TALE OF SNOW WHITE

JASMINE BAKER  
SPECIAL TO THE NATION

FOR MANY OF us, the story of "Snow White" conjures up images of a daydreaming princess singing "Someday My Prince Will Come" to her wide-eyed dwarf pals or whistling a happy tune while doing housework with cute woodland animals.

Artistic director of the Preljocaj Ballet Angelin Preljocaj, however, ditched Disney in favour of the Grimm brothers' original story as his inspiration for the timeless tale staged on Wednesday night as part of Bangkok's 16th International Festival of Dance and Music.

The renowned French choreographer instead took his audience into a strange world of dark beauty, base desires and death. The contemporary ballet opened with a loud bang, the stage filling with smoke, as an elegant woman dressed in black collapsed to the ground. Writhing in excruciating pain, she died alone in childbirth. This striking first scene was a far cry from the romantic image of a queen sewing by an open window during a winter snowfall stuck in my mind from childhood cartoons.

The sullen atmosphere was sustained throughout the performance with murky yet beguiling lighting in most scenes. The music score, combining Mahler and electronic sounds by 79D, added an entrancing, otherworldly air to the production. Visceral sexuality was heightened with Jean Paul Gaultier's racy costumes that exposed much of the group dancers' bare legs and turned the seductive Stepmother (Cecilia Torres Morillo) into a dominatrix, complete with a black leather corset and thigh-high boots.

Even Snow White (Emilie Lalande) herself was not as pure as her name suggests. Wearing Gaultier's white diaper-dress with a plunging neckline and figure-revealing slits up the side, the heroine seemed eager to leave her virginal childhood for the adult world of pleasures. Snow White didn't wait for love, choosing her Prince (Jean-Charles Jousni) at her coming-of-age ball earlier in the show. The pair even ran off to a lovers' lane in the woods and got to know each other better in a passionate, fluid pas de deux amidst four other scantily clad couples.

The overall choreography though, seemed a little hit-and-miss. Despite all the dancers being barefoot, many sequences felt like a less impressive pastiche of well-known classical and dramatic ballets. The palace ball reminded me of Princess Aurora's coming-of-age party in "Sleeping Beauty", with the same classical format of a corps de ballet showcase interspersed with smaller



Above: Snow White bites into the apple and is dragged across the stage by her wicked stepmother.

## STAGE REVIEW



Left: Costumes, including Snow White's revealing frock, were designed by Jean Paul Gaultier.



group dances. The courtship in the woods was reminiscent of the balcony scene pas de deux in "Romeo and Juliet" while the Prince's solo in response to the discovery of Snow White's "corpse" brought to mind the heartbroken Duke Albrecht's dance in "Giselle".

The contemporary ballet nevertheless had its moments of ingenuity. Instead of following the fairy tale and giving Snow White a poisonous apple for her to take a bite from, the Stepmother in Preljocaj's production violently shoved the fruit into the poor girl's mouth. She continued dragging Snow White by her head, her mouth still glued to the apple, and created an enthralling, hair-raising duet out of the movements. The Prince's subsequent pas de deux with the "dead" Snow White was also morbidly mesmerising as he manoeuvred her limp body in his arms and over his body like a skilled puppeteer in a frenzy of love and grief.

Another memorable moment in the show was the entrance of the seven miners - Preljocaj's answer to the dwarves - who abseiled down the spectacular mountain set by Thierry Leproust and started an energetic aerial ballet of flips and leaps against the shimmering brown surface. Creative aerial work wasn't used only for the acrobatics but to also enhance the emotions in the more vulnerable side of the story, when Snow White's late mother flew

down to weep over and embrace her seemingly lifeless daughter for the first time.

The chilling image of Snow White's Stepmother dancing and jerking to her death in burning iron shoes at the end summed up the dark take on the popular fairy tale perfectly.

However, even with this striking presentation, the production wasn't much more than another story ballet. Preljocaj said himself that he wanted to more deeply examine the dramatic content and symbols of the story but, to me, relevant issues like coming-of-age and loss, also could also have been explored more extensively and eloquently.

## DANCING QUEEN

■ Bangkok's 16th International Festival of Music and Dance continues tomorrow and on Wednesday with "The World's Greatest ABBA Show" by the Arrival from Sweden. Shows are at 7:30 at the Thailand Cultural Centre.

■ For tickets, visit [www.ThaiTicketMajor.com](http://www.ThaiTicketMajor.com). For more details, visit [www.BangkokFestivals.com](http://www.BangkokFestivals.com).



## 'Snow White' comes to Seoul as a ballet

'I want the Korean audience to focus on this detail when they watch the kiss scene.'

09/11/14, 2014



French choreographer Angelin Preljocaj's "Snow White" will be staged three times at the Seoul Arts Center in southern Seoul. Provided by Hyundai Card

Grimm's fairy tale "Snow White" has been loved for more than 200 years, but French choreographer Angelin Preljocaj has given it an R-rated twist in a modern ballet that is "erotic and brutal," according to Hyundai Card, who brought the performance to Korea.

Preljocaj's troupe will stage "Snow White" starting tonight for three days at the Seoul Arts Center in southern Seoul.

This high-fashion ballet has many promising ingredients. On top of the Grimm's tale, it uses a symphony by Gustav Mahler and its costumes were created by internationally renowned fashion designer Jean-Paul Gaultier, the man who came up with Madonna's infamous cone bra.

Preljocaj's choreography may be a shock to classical ballet fans. When the stepmother tries to kill Snow White with a poisoned apple, she bends Snow White's neck and back until they look like they will break. She kicks her in the stomach and drags the topless princess around.



Despite the powerful choreography, dancers say it is also delicate.

"The kiss scene, where the prince kisses Snow White, is a very important scene," said Jean-Charles Jousni, who will perform as the prince, during a press conference yesterday at the Seoul Arts Center.

"It is performed on top of Mahler Symphony No. 5 Adagietto. Although it's the final scene that could be seen as dramatic, it's very delicate and includes genuine feelings."

The prince must express how he feels with his loved one dead in front of his eyes as Mahler's Symphony No. 5 reaches its climax, according to Jousni.

"The prince knows he has to say goodbye but at the same time, he wants to reject her death," he said. "I want the Korean audience to focus on this detail when they watch the kiss scene."



Preljocaj said he interprets this scene as a "reincarnation."

"In the Grimm's original tale, Snow White dies and comes to life again upon the prince's kiss. I saw it as reincarnation," said Preljocaj. "I expressed it in my work in the most simplest form of dance."

This was by no means easy, said Preljocaj.

"For that, Emilie Lalande, who performs as Snow White, had to make a lot of effort, because Snow White is expressed as dead. The dancer should not move her body but still move together with the prince. The scene was the most difficult to approach choreographically but was the most interesting," he explained.

"I believe Mahler's symphony is a powerful piece. I get an image of a large bird soaring up to the sky with its wings spread out wide," Preljocaj continued. "I hope this show makes our dancers fly high like this bird as well as make the Korean audience feel like they are also flying high."

The show starts at 8 p.m. tonight; 5 p.m. tomorrow and at p.m. on Sunday. Tickets range from 30,000 won to 150,000 won (\$27 to \$136). Visit [ticket.interpark.com](http://ticket.interpark.com) for information.

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