

LES GRANDS

BALLETS CANADIENS DE MONTRÉAL

GRADIMIR PANKOV DIRECTEUR ARTISTIQUE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Press kit



Crédit photo : Ballet Cullberg – Lesley Leslie-Spinks

MATS EK CHOREOGRAPHER



Born in 1945 in Malmö, Sweden, Mats Ek is the son of renowned choreographer Birgit Cullberg and Swedish actor Anders Ek.

Mats Ek gravitated first toward theatre, while also taking dance classes with film-maker and choreographer Donya Feuer. He began his career as a Director at Stockholm's Marionette Theatre and Royal Dramatic Theatre. In 1973, he joined Cullberg Ballet as a dancer before turning to choreography with the company in 1976. His earliest ballets, *The Officer's Servant*, *Saint George and the Dragon*, *Soweto* and *The House of Bernarda Alba* (based on the novel by Federico Garcia Lorca), brought him international recognition. The ensuing original works he created for the company helped establish him as a major contemporary choreographer.

Ek succeeded his mother as Cullberg Ballet's Artistic Director from 1985 to 1993. His remakes of classical works for the company—particularly *Giselle* (1982), *The Rite of Spring* (1984), *Swan Lake* (1987), *Carmen* (1992) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1996)—increased his renown, and all were successfully adapted to the screen by Swedish television. He received two Emmys, an Italia and a Dance Screen award for his televised productions of *Carmen* and of *Smoke*, a duet later reworked into the ballet *Solo for Two*.

Since 1993, Ek has continued to work with Cullberg Ballet as a guest choreographer. He has also been in constant demand by the world's biggest dance companies. Notable works include *Sleeping Beauty* for Hamburg Ballet, *A Sort Of* (1997) for Nederlands Dans Theater, *Appartement* (2000) for Ballet de l'Opéra de Paris, *Fluke* (2002) for Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon, *Aluminium* (2005) for Compañía Nacional de Danza de Madrid, *Rättika* (2008) for Royal Swedish Ballet and *Place* (2008), a duo for dancers Mikhail Baryshnikov and Ana Laguna. Ek is also acclaimed for his choreographic theatre works, including *Don Giovanni* (1999), *Andromaque* (2001), *The Merchant of Venice* (2004) and *A Dreamplay* (2007), all mounted at Royal Dramatic Theatre. In 2007, he created the opera *Orphée* at Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm. Following *Solo for Two* and *Appartement*, both acquired in 2003, *Sleeping Beauty* is the third work by Ek to be included in the Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal repertoire.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Choreography and Original Idea: **Mats Ek**
Music: **Piotr Illitch Tchaikovsky**
Set and Costume Design: **Peder Freijj**
Lighting Design: **Erik Berglung**

Approximate length: 1 h 45 min

World première by Cullberg Ballet in 1996.
Performed by Cullberg Ballet at Théâtre Maisonneuve of Place des Arts on November 22, 2001.
Premiered by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal on May 7, 2009,
at Théâtre Maisonneuve of Place des Arts.

Mats Ek's ballet *Sleeping Beauty* is a liberal reappraisal of the Charles Perrault fairy tale, with 20 dancers.

"A fairy tale is like a pretty little house, but there's a sign on the door saying 'land mines!'

All fairy tales have things in common: princesses, witches, kings and queens, Good and Evil. But each one also has something unique about it, because inexplicable things happen. In *Sleeping Beauty*, for me, this mysterious moment is the actual prick of the thorn, with the sleep that follows. What does this mean, and what is really going on?

I have an irrepressible storytelling urge. Re-reading myths, legends and fairy tales, discovering their obvious aspects, sabotaging them and re-creating them—in other words, taking them seriously—is to my mind an act of the greatest significance."

Mats Ek