

# Rebellious choreography rocks the classics away

## ROCK-A-TUTU

**WHO:** The South African Ballet Theatre  
**WHERE:** Opera Stage, State Theatre  
**DIRECTOR:** Ian von Memerty  
**UNTIL:** December 14  
**RATING:** ★★★★★

**BY PINTO FERREIRA**

"Fun!" is the best word to describe SABT's enjoyable *Rock-a-Tutu* that opened this weekend in Pretoria.

This tongue-in-cheek rebellion against the cliché-ish tradition of classical ballet rids the girls from their prissy tutus, liberates the men from their bumpy tights and pumps up the volume, rocking the classics away.

This turn of events is abruptly announced by quirky narrator Carl Beukes when he hops on stage and calls a conventional ballet tableau to a halt. The audience's bursting into laughter and applause sets the scene for all to come.

The addition of a narrator to the original ballet makes this fairytale-on-steroids much more understandable – a teenager, a poor woodsman, a Queen of Denial (who is into Shaggy the Wolf), Red the Hood, a hardly helpless Granny, dwarves, wild dogs, dragons: quite bizarre!

Von Memerty's directing brings out the best in the dancers' acting abilities, making the absolute most of letting go. Lustfully on her power trip



FAIRYTALE ON STERIODS: Anya Carstens as Cleo.

PICTURE: JOHN HOGG

Angela Malan's Queen of Denial is animated to perfection, while Iain MacDonald makes more than the most of his Wolf's pelvic fixation.

Burnise Silvius' innocent Princess Rose and her best friend Red the Hood – Shannon Glover – back up their portrayal with flawless dancing.

Rose's lover Guy Wheatstone, still a member of the corps de ballet, was slightly overwhelmed by the moment (which was no mean feat, considering his company of seasoned principal dancers). This talented young dancer concentrated mostly on performing choreography. Surely he will settle into his character as the run continues.

Singers Nelda Jansen van Rensburg and Wafeeq Saffodien are brilliant. So is the excellent accompaniment of Clinton Zerf (keyboard), Theo Janse van Rensburg (guitar), Annelien Grobler (bass) and Brett Collings (drums).

No less than nine artists workshopped the choreography. In a show with such variety the conglomeration of input contributes to diversity in style, making it unpredictable and innovative. The pantomimic characterisation of these ballet dancers and the comedic randomness of the production propels this ballet into perfect children's theatre for perfect holiday entertainment. A joy to experience!

